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Pius II (neas Silvius
Piccolomini) the humanist

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POPE PIUS II



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PIUS II

(ÆNEAS SILVIUS PICCOLOMINI)

THE HUMANIST POPE

BY

CECILIA M. ADY

AUTHOR OF "A HISTORY OF MILAN UNDER THE SFORZA"

WITH SIXTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

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TO

MY MOTHER

IN MEMORY OF HAPPY DAYS IN ITALY

PREFACE

IN every period of the world's history it is the intellectual and spiritual ideals which give character to the age. This is profoundly true of the Renaissance. The contrast between the mediæval and the modern world has often been too sharply drawn, but nevertheless the fact remains that Italy in the fifteenth century was the exponent of a new intellectual ideal. Humanism is the child of the Renaissance, although the causes which brought it into being have their root far back in the Middle Ages. Humanism, moreover, is the controlling force which lies behind every aspect of Renaissance life. The highly civilised society, the political aspirations, the artistic and literary development of that marvellous age alike find their source in the humanist spirit. Many gloried in the name of humanist—great educators such as Guarino and Vittorino da Feltre, scholars such as Poggio and Aretino, Filelfo and Aurispa, to say nothing of the countless men of action, princes, warriors, and statesmen who were at once the pupils and the patrons of the men of letters. Yet among all that goodly company there is no fuller manifestation of humanism than that presented by Æneas Silvius Piccolomini. There were greater scholars than he, and more brilliant statesmen; but he belonged both to the intellectuals and to the men of action. He was the exponent of the good life, as conceived by the humanists,

and he was also able to realise it in his own career. For the ideal of these Renaissance philosophers was no scholar's Utopia. The chosen test of their system was its value in practical life, and its object was the training of the statesman, the perfect adaptation of the individual to the great society in which he must play his part.

Thus the story of Æneas Silvius affords unique insight into the phase of thought which we call humanism. It provides at once a clue to its meaning and an opportunity of estimating its value in the history of civilisation. From the day when the eager lad of eighteen left his home among the hills of Southern Tuscany to become a student at the University of Siena the gleaming banner of humanism was ever before his eyes. A ready pen and a persuasive tongue formed his chief equipment for the battle of life, and his rise by these means to the Papal throne is one of the most conspicuous triumphs of the new learning. The six years of his pontificate give us a practical example of the application of Renaissance ideals to politics. In Pius II's wise government of the States of the Church, and in his handling of the ecclesiastical problems of the day, we see the strength of humanism. His death at Ancona, on the eve of his departure for the East, and the shattering of his great crusading schemes show the limitations of humanism, which could not rekindle the vanished enthusiasms of Europe.

The chief authority for the subject is throughout Æneas Silvius himself. His letters, his histories, his essays, and above all that fascinating autobiography of his Papacy, the *Commentaries*, are one long process of self-revelation. From them we learn much of contemporary persons and events, but still more of their author. The view of life

which they set forth is half cynical, half humorous, and wholly individual. Tolerant of human frailty and keenly alive to natural beauty, Æneas reveals himself in his writings as a man who has found the world a pleasant place, in spite of drawbacks, and who would fain share his joy with others.

The greater part of Æneas's works are to be found in print, but they are scattered among various unprepossessing and none too accessible volumes, dating from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. From these it has been my task to unearth them, and the chief merit that I would claim for this biography is that it is based upon a study of the hero's own writings. Dr. Rudolf Wolkan, in *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*, which is still in process of publication, has done valuable service in collecting and editing the letters of Æneas Silvius in an authoritative form. He has ransacked the archives of Italy and Germany in search of manuscripts, and the result of his labours has been the collection of no less than 1263 letters belonging to the pre-Papal period, as against the 559 letters known to Voigt. For the history of Pius II's pontificate, I, in common with all students of Papal history, owe much to the valuable collection of diplomatic documents contained in Dr. Pastor's *History of the Popes*. Georg Voigt's *Enea Silvio de' Piccolomini als Papst Pius II und sein Zeitalter* still holds its own as the standard work of reference for the life and times of Æneas Silvius. It is a monument of learning, and an almost inexhaustible mine of information, although the author, like the Germans of the fifteenth century, is unable to judge fairly of a character that is essentially Latin. The majority of other writers have flown to the opposite extreme, and have accepted

Æneas at his own valuation. Dr. Creighton, however, has approached this subtle character-study with penetrating insight, and has appreciated Æneas even while he criticised him. His essay on Æneas Silvius, and the volume of the *History of the Papacy* which treats of his career, can hardly fail to be the inspiration of all future work on the subject.

In conclusion, I would thank all those who have helped me both with regard to the letterpress and to the illustrations. The portrait of Pius II which forms the frontispiece is from a contemporary bust in the Borgia Apartments of the Vatican. The name of the sculptor is not known, but there is good reason for supposing it to be the work of Paolo Romano, who was certainly employed by Pius II. It is reproduced here for the first time, and my thanks are due to Signor Francesco Cagiati for enabling me to obtain a photograph. The medals and coins reproduced opposite page 180 are from casts taken in the British Museum through the kindness of Mr. G. F. Hill. I should also like to express my thanks to Conte Silvio and Contessa Piccolomini for their hospitality during a golden day at Pienza; to Conte Francesco Bandini-Piccolomini for the assistance which he rendered to me in Siena; and to Signor Attilio Boni for his information with regard to the transference of the body of Pius II to its final resting-place in the Church of S. Andrea della Valle.

CECILIA M. ADY

S. HUGH'S COLLEGE, OXFORD
September 1913

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"SILVARUM AMATOR ET VARIA VIDENDI CUPIDUS

Pii II, *Commentarii*, lib. ix

PIUS II

CHAPTER I

THE UNIVERSITY OF SIENA

“**T**HERE rises in the Val d’Orcia a hill, crowned by a plateau about a mile long, and much less than a mile wide. Here, on a spur which looks towards the rising sun in winter, lies a town of small repute, yet possessed of salubrious air, and well furnished with wine and provisions of every kind.”¹ So wrote Pope Pius II, the *condottiere* of letters who had won his way to greatness by means of a persuasive tongue and a ready pen, of his native Corsignano, the town which he was to adorn and ennoble, and to stamp with the undying impress of his personality under the name of Pienza.

The description is modest enough, yet apart from its illustrious son there is little or nothing that is remarkable about Pienza. Some three miles to the west runs the Via Francigena—the way of the Franks to Rome—and along that great high road the countless stream of conquerors and pilgrims came and went, leaving the remote Tuscan townlet unnoticed and unvisited. To-day Pienza is still farther removed from the highway of traffic. Its nearest link with the cosmopolitan world lies fifteen miles to the east in the Chiana valley, where trains with their freight of tourists halt at the wayside station of Montepulciano. Few

¹ Pii Secundi Pont. Max., *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 44 (Frankfurt, 1614).

of these modern conquerors leave the beaten track to ascend even the steep hill-side, on the summit of which towers the fortress-city of Montepulciano. Fewer still penetrate across the bare tract of country which separates Montepulciano from Pienza. Yet for a little company of adventurers the way is not too far, and the motive of their perseverance has its source in an earlier pilgrimage. On a day in February 1459, the Roman Pontiff, going with cardinals and princes in his train to meet the rulers of the Christian world in conference at Mantua, turned aside from the great highway to visit the home of his childhood. Only a few months earlier, Æneas Silvius Piccolomini had mounted the throne of S. Peter under the title of Pius II, and he determined that his native village should share his new-found glory. In the course of a three days' visit the scheme was made which gave Pienza its title to fame. As the birthplace of Æneas Silvius the name of Corsignano might perhaps have survived in history. As the object of his filial love Pienza remains a unique specimen of Renaissance architecture, with its cathedral and episcopal palace, its Palazzo Pubblico and Palazzo Piccolomini grouped round the tiny Piazza Pio Secondo, a single artistic whole. The atmosphere of the country is, even to-day, that of the Middle Ages. It is a land of ruined fortresses, bleak hills, and uncompromising ash-grey soil.¹ Yet here amid mediæval surroundings rises Pienza, a fair flower of the Renaissance planted by one who was the living embodiment of the spirit of his age.

The origin of Pienza's greatness dates from the opening of the fifteenth century, when it formed the refuge of a decayed Sienese noble and his family, representatives of the once illustrious house of Piccolomini. In the thirteenth century, that hey-day of municipal prosperity, the Piccolomini ranked among the leading families of Siena. Closely allied with the proud house of Tolomei, which claimed descent from the Ptolemies of Egypt, they belonged

¹ Gagnoni Schippisi (*Terre Toscane*, Firenze, 1902) describes the Val d'Orcia.

to the class of merchant nobles whose high birth formed no obstacle to their pursuit of business. To men such as these Siena owed her most signal triumphs both in war and commerce. As merchants, they enriched the city with the proceeds of their traffic in the marts of Europe ; as warriors, they upheld the honour of the Republic in the unending struggle with its Florentine rival. So long as they had their share in the responsibilities and glories of the city-State, both Siena and these noble families prospered. When, however, towards the end of the thirteenth century, the nobles were ousted from the government, not only did the military efficiency of Siena suffer, but the nobles, deprived of their occupation, spent themselves and their substance in private feuds. The Piccolomini experienced to the full the evil days which had fallen upon the nobility. In the course of some hundred years they had sunk to a condition little short of destitution ; their vast possessions round Siena were all lost, and Silvius Posthumus, on succeeding to the family inheritance, found that it was practically limited to Corsignano. Here, in the retirement of his own estate, poverty seemed easier to face than in Siena. Having taken to himself a wife—Vittoria Forteguerria—as aristocratic and as impecunious as himself, he settled upon this barren property, and on S. Luke's Day (18 Oct.) 1405 a son was born to him who was to revive the ancient glories of his race.

The childhood of Æneas Silvius is not without its inevitable background of wonder. Platina, in his life of Pius II, thus relates the dream which troubled Vittoria before the birth of her son : “ Now his Mother when she was big with Child dreamed that she had brought forth a Boy with a Mitre on his head ; at which she was afraid (as people are apt to make the worst of things) that her dream betokened some dishonour to their Child and Family ; nor could she be eased of her fear till she heard that her Son was made Bishop of Trieste. And upon that news she was freed from all fear, and gave God thanks that

she saw her Son more happy than she expected.”¹ When the little Æneas was three years old he fell from a high wall and made a miraculous recovery. A few years later the children of Corsignano played a game in which Æneas was crowned Pope and received the homage of his companions. At the age of eight he was tossed by a bull and suffered no injury.² Apart from these incidents the child grew up among surroundings that were commonplace and even sordid. Vittoria was the mother of no less than eighteen children, of whom several died in infancy, and only Æneas and his two sisters—Laudomia and Caterina—eventually survived. At a time when there were some ten small children to support, grinding poverty must have been the distinguishing feature of the Piccolomini household. Silvius Posthumus could only provide for his family by himself undertaking the cultivation of his estates, which lay for the most part on that strange chalky soil to be found among the volcanic hills of Southern Tuscany. In outward appearance it is unprepossessing enough, especially where the rains have furrowed grey and white gullies on the hill-sides, or where the loosely-knit earth has crumbled into fantastically shaped knolls and lumps. Yet unremitting toil can make this country enormously productive, as may be seen at Monte Oliveto not many miles away, where the labours of generations of monks have transformed a barren hill-side into a smiling garden. The modern road from Montepulciano to Pienza passes at first through undulating well-wooded country, while, here and there, a break in the woods affords a view over the smiling Chiana valley. Gradually, however, the woods disappear, and the landscape grows sterner. Only an occasional farm with its circle of ricks, or a solitary oak bent by the wind, breaks the prevailing desolation. The Val di Chiana has given place to the bleak grandeur of the Val d’Orcia. Finally

¹ Platina, B., *Lives of the Popes*, p. 389 (Rycaut’s Translation, London, 1688).

² *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 2.

the road reaches the plateau on which Pienza itself stands, and the rough sign-posts, which proclaim the land on either side of the way to be the property of the Piccolomini, call up a vivid picture of the scenes amidst which Æneas and his father laboured.

South of Pienza the ground falls away abruptly into the valley, and on the extreme edge of the plateau, overlooking the vines and olives which cover the slope, stood the old house of the Piccolomini. From this spot the whole panorama of the Val d'Orcia spreads itself before the eye. Below, over its chalky bed, winds the river from which the valley takes its name—here slow and serpent-like, there with the force and rapidity of a torrent. On the opposite bank tower the majestic heights of Monte Amiata, the grandest of all the Tuscan hills, her slopes clad with groves of oak and beech and chestnut, her summit veiled in a wreath of cloud. Southward runs the road to Rome, bearing with it a thousand memories and myriad dreams. To the north, countless gentle hills crowned with city or fortress lose themselves in the blue distance, and among them that which boasts the fairest crown of all—Siena, the City of the Virgin, poised as a bird ready for flight. For eighteen years this threefold prospect in all its variety of light and shade formed part of the daily life of the future Pope, moulding in a hundred unsuspected ways his peculiarly impressionable and sensuous nature. Surely it is no stretch of imagination to see in this view from his father's house the epitome of Æneas Silvius's career. Siena was the mother-city from whence he sprang, the centre of his deep patriotic feeling, and at the same time the unnatural parent who had thrust forth the Piccolomini from her gates. The mingled sentiments of pride and bitterness with which the young Æneas must have gazed on her dim outline were produced in every phase of his subsequent relations with the Republic. Rome, on the other hand, must needs be the ultimate goal of one who united the ambitions of a humanist and an ecclesiastic. Not until

Æneas had settled in Rome as a Cardinal was he able to obtain access to the books for which he had longed since his student-days. In Rome alone lay the sure path of ecclesiastical preferment. Yet when the strivings of a lifetime had been crowned with success and Æneas sat on the Papal throne, his chief pleasure was to escape from Rome, and to seek relief from the burden of his cares amid the scenes of his childhood. Each year as the spring came round, that "lover of forests, and eager sight-seer,"¹ as he called himself, set out on his travels; and well as he learned to appreciate the beauties of the Papal States, it was to his beloved Tuscan *contado* that his steps most readily turned. Of all his country wanderings, none afforded him such entire delight as the summer spent on Monte Amiata, in the ancient Abbey of S. Salvatore, where, far removed from the heat and turmoil of the valley, he could picnic beside a running stream beneath the shade of the chestnut trees, and fancy himself already in Paradise.

The elder Piccolomini had spent some years in Milan at the Court of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, and was not without education or knowledge of the world. To him Æneas owed his early training, supplemented by the instruction of the village priest, who ministered to his flock in the ancient Pieve of SS. Vito e Modesto. The little dark church with its round tower is still standing in the fields outside the town, proud in the possession of a font from which two Popes received baptism.² From the first, Æneas threw himself eagerly into his studies, devoting all his spare moments to his books. "Yet what literary education could he obtain," asks Gregorio Lolli, "there, buried in the country, without books or teachers?"³ Silvius and Vittoria realised that their son was worthy of a better education than Corsignano could offer, and they

¹ "Silvarum amator, et varia videndi cupidus" (*Commentarii*, lib. ix. p. 217).

² Pius II and his nephew Pius III.

³ Gregorio Lolli to the Cardinal of Pavia, *Cardinalis Papiensis Epistolae*, Ep. 47 (printed in *Commentarii*, Pii II, pp. 492-5).



PIENZA

determined to send him to the University of Siena. The effort was well worth making, for once Æneas had graduated in jurisprudence he would have an assured means of livelihood as a lawyer. Moreover, Silvius's half-sister Bartolomea¹ had married Niccolò Lolli, a citizen of Siena, and by lodging under their roof Æneas could reduce the expenses of his University career to the lowest possible figure. Thus it came about that in 1423 Æneas turned his back upon the old house on the hill-side, and took the northern road to Siena, there to plunge into the vivid life of an Italian University. From that time forward Æneas's lot was cast far from Corsignano. There is, in fact, no record of his return to his native village from the day that he left it as a lad of eighteen until he entered it in 1459 as the head of Christendom. Yet throughout the crowded years, in which he rose from obscurity to greatness, the memory of his Tuscan home was never allowed to fade. Strong family affection, love of home, and joy in the pleasures of country-life were fundamental to his nature. After he became Pope, the humanist Campano found a sure way to please and distract him when he composed a verse playing upon the Christian names of the Piccolomini parents. Pius II, he said, was distinguished by his love of the woods and his delight in travel, as well as by a glorious career of conquest. What else could be expected in the son of Silvius and Vittoria?

Quod victore Pio fieri tot proelia cernis,
 Invalidasque suis hostibus esse manus;
 Ne mirere: Pium peperit victoria mater
 Matris ab uberibus vincere sic didicit.
 Quod placeant silvae, et magnum lustraverit orbem
 Silvius hac genuit conditione pater.
 Jure igitur latae spaciatur, et omnia vincit,
 Patris obire orbem, vincere matris habet.²

¹ Bartolomea's father was a Tolomei. She and Silvius had the same mother.

² *Commentarii*, lib. ix. p. 217. "Do not marvel if you see Pius victorious in every battle, and the strength of his enemies of no avail.

When Æneas came to Siena in 1423, the fair Tuscan city must have teemed with new and thrilling experiences for the country-bred boy. Since the overthrow of foreign rule on the death of Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Siena had gradually settled down to a period of peace and revived prosperity in which the fury of party-strife was abated. The nobility had been reduced to a state of impotence which disarmed suspicion, with the result that some of the minor offices in the Republic were thrown open to the *Gentiluomini*. Indeed, the new Government included four out of the five *Monti* or factions, which had vied with each other for supreme power in the State during the fourteenth century. Only the *Dodicini* were wholly excluded, a faction composed of small tradesmen and notaries who have been described as "the worst rulers that ever held sway over this ill-governed State."¹ They now reaped the reward of having helped to betray their city to Visconti, and an annual festival was instituted to celebrate their overthrow. Owing to this settlement, Siena had never seemed gayer, more splendid, or more prosperous than when this young scion of the Piccolomini entered her gates. The forces to which she owed her supremacy were not abated, while the spirit of the early Renaissance had come to crown her with a new magnificence.

From the first distant view of her forest of towers, "ten times more numerous than those of S. Gemignano to-day,"² there was everything in Siena's outward appearance to attract the eye and fire the patriotic pride of Æneas Silvius. Few cities in Europe at that time boasted more splendid buildings, few were cleaner or better ordered, nowhere had the civic spirit fuller manifestation. The

Pius was born of his mother Vittoria, and from his mother's womb he learned to conquer. If the woods delight him and he traverses the great world, his father Silvius begat him with this disposition. His father impels him to encompass the globe, his mother to conquer."

¹ Langton Douglas, *History of Siena* (London, 1902), p. 153.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 122.

building of the Duomo, most famous and most characteristic of Siena's monuments, had from the first been carried out under the auspices of the Republic. The body of the church dated from the thirteenth century, but the façade had not been completed fifty years when Æneas saw it. As to the chief wonder of the Duomo, the pavement pictures, some of the earliest among them were even then in process of execution.¹ Next in importance to the Duomo stood the great Palazzo Pubblico with its soaring tower. There on the Piazza del Campo, at the centre of Siena's life, it showed itself the true parent of the surrounding palaces, which were planned after the same design. Scattered up and down the city were the Fountains, the favourite meeting-places of both politicians and lovers. On all sides were signs that in the days of her greatness the citizens of Siena had placed the glory of the Republic above personal ambitions. In the fifteenth century the great days were over, and a long period of faction and misrule had undermined the very foundations of the State. Yet the traditions of an earlier age still survived. Great public institutions such as the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala were under communal management, and the University itself was a child of the Republic, its professors being chosen and paid by the State. The pride of the Sienese in their city also showed itself in such practical matters as the condition of the streets. Early in the fourteenth century the main thoroughfares were paved with brick, and the side-streets with stones, while crooked alleys were gradually made straight, and narrow lanes widened or closed. There were strict laws against blocking up the main streets with tables or tents, and against throwing water or refuse out of the windows. Moreover, every citizen was bound on pain of a fine to sweep the space in front of his own house at

¹ The series of Old Testament subjects on the pavement below the high altar, of which "King David with Four Musicians" forms the central picture, were executed in the years 1423-4. Cf. R. Hobart Cust, *The Pavement Masters of Siena*.

least once a week.¹ Thus in many ways Siena was a model to other cities of the day. Generations of citizens had made her beauty and orderliness their peculiar pride, while Nature had employed her subtlest arts to crown her loveliness. What wonder if Æneas lost his heart to Siena at first sight, or if in spite of friction and disappointment she remained to the last his beloved city—"dulcissima patria."²

The University of Siena, which Æneas now entered as a student, boasted honourable and ancient traditions. Since the year 1240 at any rate it had existed as a fully organised University, and the Republic had been at pains to strengthen its teaching staff by inviting professors from other Universities to occupy Chairs at Siena.³ Nevertheless, it stood at this moment somewhat outside the main current of learning in Italy. When the spirit of humanism was alive and abroad, and men turned to classical literature as to the very fountain of life, Siena still clung to the traditions of the mediæval curriculum. The Seven Liberal Arts were regarded as the gateway to the three great Sciences—Law, Medicine, and Theology,—and it was to the study of the first of these that the energies of the University were chiefly directed. Classical teachers there were, of course. Æneas, we are told, learned grammar from Antonio da Arezzo, and rhetoric from Mattia Lupi of S. Gemignano and Giovanni da Spoleto.⁴ Yet none of these men were scholars of the first rank; they were grammarians rather than humanists in the scope and method of their teaching. The spirit of humanism was, however, by no means absent from Siena. If the professed teachers of the classics were dull to the new

¹ Cf. Langton Douglas, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-31, "Life in Old Siena"; Heywood, *Palio and Ponte*, p. 65.

² *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 40.

³ Cf. Douglas, *op. cit.*, p. 117. Rashdall (*Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, vol. ii. p. 34) says of Siena, "The most remarkable feature of this University throughout its history is the closeness of its dependence upon the town."

⁴ *Cardinalis Papiensis Epistolae*, Ep. 47.

learning, there were others in the University who had been profoundly influenced by it. Chief among these was the Professor of Jurisprudence, Mariano de' Sozzini. Although a renowned jurist and the author of many weighty volumes on Civil and Canon Law, he had contrived in the intervals of his professional labours to steep himself in the literature of antiquity. He it was who first opened our hero's eyes to the great world of letters. Through Sozzini, Æneas learned something of what it meant to glory in the name of humanist.

The Professor of Jurisprudence, with his versatile talents and his boundless enthusiasm, was pre-eminently fitted to be an inspirer of youth. Æneas, on his side, ardent, impressionable, unflagging in his energy, must have been an ideal pupil. He succumbed completely to Sozzini's spell, and has left a portrait of him in one of his letters which proclaims in every line the influence which the elder man exercised over the younger. "Nature," writes Æneas of Mariano Sozzini,¹ "denied him nothing but stature. He is a little man and should belong to my family, which has the surname of Piccolomini (*parvorum hominum*). He is a man of eloquence and is versed in both Civil and Canon Law; he has a knowledge of universal history and is a skilful poet, composing songs in both Latin and Tuscan. He is as learned in philosophy as Plato, and in geometry as Boetius, while in arithmetic he may be compared with Macrobius. He is a stranger to no musical instrument, and knows almost as much of agriculture as Vergil. While the strength of youth remained in his limbs he was another Entellus; master in the games, he could not be surpassed in running, jumping, or boxing. . . . If the gods had bequeathed to him stature and immortality he would himself have been a god. Yet no mortal man is endowed with every gift, and I know no one who lacks fewer than he." To these manifold talents were added "the moral qualities which rule and

¹ Æneas Silvius to Kaspar Schlick, Vienna, 1444 (Wolkan, *Der Briefwechsel des Eneas Silvius Piccolomini*, pt. i. vol. i. ep. 153).

guide others." Sozzini was no mere scholar, but an active citizen, whose sound judgment, ready hospitality, and agreeable manners earned for him the esteem of his fellows. "While I was in Siena," concludes his admiring pupil, "I loved him above all others, and separation has not diminished my affection."

Humanism is an intangible expression, chiefly because its essence lies less in any new system of learning than in a new way of regarding life. The humanist aimed above all things at producing a fresh type of individual, and thus a description of character such as Æneas gives of his University professor affords perhaps the best clue to the meaning of humanism as a whole. The ideal of every true humanist was the complete citizen, an individual equipped in the fullest possible way to play his part in the world. Sozzini with his social gifts and his interest in public affairs stands in marked contrast to the unpractical bookworm, ignorant of the simplest matters of everyday life and "incapable of ruling either the commonwealth or the household."¹ Learning, to the humanist, is not an end in itself, it is a means of acquiring wisdom and judgment, and it must be viewed always in the light of its value in the world of action. Or, as Æneas himself expressed it in later years, "The model of all good living is to be found in the study of Letters."² The practical aims of humanism naturally made expression a matter of first importance. *Eloquentia*, taken in its widest sense to include style, oratory, and every form of literary expression, must be cultivated at all costs, because without it learning is but a dead thing, incommunicable and ineffective. This attention to expression descends even to such minute details as the question of handwriting. "It is no credit to the great Alfonso," wrote Æneas of the ruler of Naples, "that his signature was most like the traces of a worm crawling over the

¹ Wolkan, Ep. 153.

² Æneas Silvius to Sigismund, Count of Tyrol, 5 Dec. 1443 (Wolkan, Ep. 99): "Omnis bene vivendi norma litterarum studio continetur."

paper.”¹ With regard to Sozzini, he draws attention not only to his good literary style and conversational powers, but to the fact that “nothing could be clearer or more immaculate than the manuscripts written with his own hand.”² Sozzini’s athletic prowess, also, was in entire conformity with the humanist ideal. The complete citizen must aim at perfection of body as well as of mind, and such matters as bearing, gesture, dress, courtesy, no less than actual physical exercises, must find a place in his scheme of education. Above all, this new type of individual must possess the art of enjoying life. The mists of the Middle Ages had rolled away, and the great world had revealed itself, no longer as an evil to be shunned, but as a thing of wonder and beauty, to be enjoyed and understood to the uttermost. “The rediscovery of the world and the rediscovery of man.” This is what we understand by the Renaissance, and this is the secret which first unfolded itself to Æneas Silvius when he hung on the lips of Mariano Sozzini in Siena.

If humanism was primarily a new point of view, there was nothing intangible or uncertain about the means of attaining it. The humanists were confident that their ideal had once been realised in the ancient world, and that the entrance into their heritage lay through the gateway of classical literature. In Æneas’s case there was no intelligent classical tutor to guide his reading, yet Sozzini had supplied the inspiration which set his feet in the right direction, and for the rest “he studied more under dead teachers than under living.” Cicero, Vergil, Livy, “and other princes of the Latin tongue,” themselves became his teachers. With a passion strong enough to overcome all obstacles, he set himself to acquire the distinguished education which would admit him into the great freemasonry of learning. Niccolò and Bartolomea Lolli had a son Gregorio

¹ *De Liberorum Educatione* (Opera, Basel, 1571, pp. 965-91). Cf. also Woodward, *Vittorino da Felvre*, etc.

² Wolkan, Ep. 153.

—or Goro as he was commonly called—who was a fellow-student with Æneas at the University. In later years this Goro Lolli became a Papal secretary, and was one of the little circle of friends who attended Pius II on his death-bed. Shortly afterwards he wrote a letter¹ to another of Pius II's intimates—Cardinal Jacopo Ammanati—in which he gives his reminiscences of student-days in Siena when Æneas was living in his father's house and sharing, in all probability, his own room. Æneas's work, Goro tells us, was done chiefly at home, and here he would sit day and night poring over his books "with such diligence that he hardly allowed himself food or sleep." He made a practice of doing without supper three times a week for the sake of economy, and at other times he would be so intent on his studies that he forgot to eat. "In the morning he rose before daybreak, and he took his books with him when he went to bed, in order that the time between waking and sleeping should not be lost to study." One night the tired student dropped asleep over his books, and awoke to find that the lamp by which he had been reading had set the bed-clothes on fire and that he was surrounded by smoke and flames. His cry of terror fortunately roused Goro and some other students who came to his rescue, and having extinguished the fire, they proceeded to indulge in much merriment at Æneas's expense. His poverty made it very difficult for him to get the books which he wanted, and he was reduced for the most part to borrowing from his friends. From these borrowed volumes he made copious extracts for future reference, "so that he might not cause too great inconvenience to the owners of the books." Such were the conditions under which Æneas Silvius followed the gleaming banner of humanism, and by sheer force of character he may be said to have succeeded in his quest. Of all the scholars of the early Renaissance none was more thoroughly imbued with the true spirit of humanism than

¹ Gregorio Lolli to the Cardinal of Pavia, *Cardinalis Papiensis Epistolae*, Ep. 47.

this struggling, self-taught youth. Yet no amount of talent or perseverance could altogether make up for the lack of teaching, for the absence of anything approaching the persistent individual instruction which great educators like Vittorino da Feltre gave to their pupils. Æneas, for all his true appreciation of Greek literature, never mastered the rudiments of the Greek language; his natural gift of style notwithstanding, he was never able to write really good Latin.

The University experiences of Æneas Silvius were by no means confined to the sphere of learning. Siena, according to her chronicler Sigismondo Tizio, was famed for "the affability and hospitality of her inhabitants, the beauty and allurements of her women, and the love which her populace hath ever borne for festivals and games."¹ During eight years of vivid life Æneas drank deep of the cup of pleasure. He shared in the wild games of Pugna and Pallone which were played on the Piazza del Campo. He joined with patriotic ardour in the great public festivals. Above all, he knew what it was to lie by the fountains on hot June evenings, and to bask in the smiles of the "pleasant ladies" who beguiled the hearts of the University students. Perhaps the most famous of Æneas's writings is his novel *Eurialus et Lucretia*, which tells of a love intrigue between a German knight and a Sienese lady at the time of the Emperor Sigismund's sojourn in the city. The events which formed the basis of his plot took place in 1432, more than a year after Æneas had left Siena. Yet the background of the romance is life in Siena as Æneas himself knew it. From it we catch glimpses of that strange medley of gaiety and folly, innocent enjoyment and unrestrained vice, high civilisation and primitive passion which was at once the fascination and the bane of Sienese society. The novel was written at the request of Mariano Sozzini, who, to judge from Æneas's dedicatory

¹ Tizio, *Storia Senese*, MS. in Biblioteca Comunale Siena. Quoted by Heywood, *Palio and Ponte*, p. 190.

epistle,¹ initiated his pupil into the frivolous as well as into the studious aspect of University life. It treats of an incident which actually occurred in Siena, and the originals of the principal characters were known to many at the time the story was written. Eurialus was beyond doubt Æneas's future patron, the German Chancellor, Kaspar Schlick. No real clue exists with regard to the identity of Lucretia; but a theory has been advanced which would make her none other than the wife of Mariano Sozzini, and Sozzini himself the duped husband of the story. If this were true, Æneas's response to the request for a love-story, and the tribute of praise which he paid to Sozzini in his letter to Kaspar Schlick, formed part of the same bitter jest. Yet it is difficult to believe that Æneas would play so scurvy a trick upon his old tutor, and as the theory rests upon the purest conjecture, we can afford to treat it with scant attention.²

The story itself is neither more original nor less delicate than others of its kind. It tells of violent love, of secret notes, and of stolen interviews snatched under the very nose of the jealous husband. It ends in a tragic parting on the return of the Imperial Court to Germany. Lucretia is left to die of a broken heart, while Eurialus mourns her loss until he finds consolation in a marriage arranged for him by the Emperor. Æneas was only too familiar with the details of such intrigues. "What man of thirty," he asks, "has not ventured something in the cause of love? I ground this conjecture upon myself, whom love has exposed to a thousand dangers; but I thank the gods that I have escaped a thousand times from

¹ Æneas Silvius to Mariano Sozzini, Vienna, 3 July 1444 (Wolkan, Ep. 152). This letter contains the novel itself. *Eurialus et Lucretia* appears also in various editions of Pius II's works, and was translated into many languages. The earliest English version I have found is "*The most excellent Historie of Euryalus and Lucretia*. Translated from the Latin by W. Braunche. London, 1596."

² Zannoni, *Per la storia di due amanti* (*Atti della R. Accademia dei Lincei*, serie iv. vol. vi. pp. 116-27, Rome, 1890). Prof. Zannoni himself admits that his theory has no basis of proof.

the toils laid for me.”¹ In his University days the temptations to intrigue were rendered greater by the fact that the students reigned supreme in the fancies of the Sienese ladies. “Men of this class,” he writes of the University students, “used to enjoy high favour with our women, but since Cæsar’s Court came to Siena they have been ridiculed, despised, and hated; for our ladies find more delight in the clash of arms than in the refinement of letters.”² *Eurialus et Lucretia* shows, moreover, how conducive was the whole atmosphere of Sienese society to the more dangerous forms of flirtation. Unmarried girls of the upper class were kept in the strictest seclusion, and wives were hardly less jealously guarded by their husbands. Yet with rigid rules went a low standard of morality, and at the same time there was a certain freedom and unconventionality in social entertainments which gave endless opportunities for secret intercourse between the sexes. About a mile outside the city was a certain Chapel of the Blessed Virgin which the ladies of Siena were wont to visit. Here the young gallants would station themselves, and offer bouquets of flowers and other tokens to the objects of their admiration. The ladies would accept the gifts and bestow their smiles with so fine an impartiality that none could tell their real feelings.³ Then, in the seclusion of their own chambers, they would examine the bouquet of the favoured lover and extract maybe a love-letter or a poem from the heart of a bunch of violets. In the winter the youth of the city made snowballing their favourite pastime. The ladies threw snowballs into the streets, and the students in return pelted the ladies at their windows. Even this innocent recreation could be turned to the purposes of intrigue, and a snowball be made the bearer of a message between secret lovers. With regard

¹ Æneas to Sozzini (Wolkan, Ep. 153, p. 354).

² *Eurialus et Lucretia* (Wolkan, Ep. 153, p. 378).

³ Cf. *Eurialus et Lucretia*, p. 378: “Illa, sicut mos est nostris dominabus, omnes vultu blando intuebatur. Ars est sive deceptio potius, ne verus amor palam fiat.”

to Æneas himself, he won his earliest literary reputation as the writer of somewhat coarse love-poems. Tradition says that the object of his devotion in Siena was a certain Angela, the wife of Francesco Acherisi.¹ She, however, despised him on account of his poverty, and made mock of his shabby clothes. "Let readers learn wisdom from the ills of others, and strive to avoid drinking of the potions of love, seeing that they contain far more gall than honey."² Such is the moral of *Eurialus et Lucretia*, and Æneas, it seems, could testify to its truth from personal experience.

Love-making apart, there is nothing in Æneas's writings to show what share he had in the pastimes of his fellow-students. He certainly did not distinguish himself as an athlete, and was probably never robust enough to appreciate such violent forms of recreation as the *Giuoco della Pugna* (Game of Fisticuffs), so graphically described by a contemporary novelist. The game was extremely popular with the University students, yet Gentile Sermini, who had played it in his youth, cannot help admitting that "the on-lookers have three parts of the fun; the players get the rest, and have in addition their bruised sides and heads, and their dislocated and broken bones, hands, arms, ribs and jaws."³ Poverty alone would have prevented Æneas from competing in the famous races for the Palio. Yet his treatise on the Nature and Care of Horses⁴ proves that he took an interest in horse-flesh, and these races were so bound up with the public life of Siena that no patriotic citizen could stand aloof from them.⁵ The most important races for the Palio took place on the Festival of the

¹ Lesca, p. 48. Cf. Cugnoni, p. 342.

² *Eurialus et Lucretia*, *op. cit.*, p. 393.

³ Sermini, *Le Novelle*, "Il Giuoco della Pugna" (*Raccolta di Novellieri Italiani*, Parte Seconda, Firenze, 1833).

⁴ Printed for the first time by Wolkan (Ep. 154, p. 395).

⁵ The Palio was the piece of silk, velvet, or other material given as the prize for horse-races in Italy; in course of time the word came to be used not only for the prize but for the race itself. For a full account of the Palio and other pastimes of Italy, cf. Mr. Heywood's delightful book, *Palio and Ponte*.

Assumption (15 August), a day which Æneas had looked upon from earliest childhood as the greatest in the whole year. It was not only a great religious festival, but also the chief civic holiday, a perpetual memorial of Siena's triumphant victory over the Florentines at Montaperto (1260). In the hour of despair before the battle the Sienese had turned for help to the Blessed Virgin, and with the full ritual of feudalism had recognised her as their liege Lady. That same night the Florentine sentries "beheld as it were a mantle most white which covered all the camp of the Sienese and the city of Siena."¹ It was the mantle of Siena's blessed suzerain, who was to prove in the morrow's battle the worth of her protecting care. From that day forward Siena adopted the title of *Civitas Virginis*, the great bell of the Mangia Tower began its summons to the magistrates of the Republic by "three distinct and separate strokes in memory of the Angelic Salutation,"² and the Festival of the Assumption became the crown of the city's festivities.³

Early in August each year the streets of Siena began to throng with strangers who had come to take part in the approaching fair. On the morning of the 14th the ceremonies opened with a solemn procession of the chief magistrates to the Duomo, where each in turn made an offering of a wax candle for the benefit of the Cathedral Works. This was an obligation incumbent on every citizen of Siena on the Vigil of the Assumption, the weight of each man's candle being apportioned according to the amount of his taxable property. Thus processions of citizens from the various parishes continued throughout the day, and on the morrow came representatives of the subject towns and other feudatories bringing such offerings of candles and money as were required of them by the terms of their submission to the Republic. It was a proud day for any citizen

¹ *Palio and Ponte*, p. 34.

² *Ibid.*, p. 38.

³ I am largely indebted to Mr. Heywood's description of the "Festival of Our Lady of August," given in *Palio and Ponte*, pp. 55-67.

of Siena when he saw Counts of Santa Fiora, Lords of Campiglia, and members of many another ancient house, coming to render obedience to the free commonwealth. Yet if, like Æneas, he belonged to the despised *Monte dei Gentiluomini*, pride must have been mingled with humiliation. Not only were the nobles excluded from all real power, but some, and maybe the Piccolomini among them, were excused on account of their abject poverty from contributing to the pile of candles accumulating in the Duomo. After these ceremonies came the contest for the Palio, and the remainder of the day was given over to feasting and dancing. At nightfall all the city was illuminated and bonfires blazed on the surrounding hills, none more conspicuous than that which shone on the old house at Corsignano as it leapt from the summit of Monte Amiata.

Suddenly, amidst this gay, careless life, a stern voice sounded. The City of the Virgin seemed to have become something more nearly resembling the City of Venus, when she was recalled to her better self by the preaching of S. Bernardino. It was in May 1425 that S. Bernardino first preached in Siena. An altar and pulpit were erected on the Piazza del Campo, and among the crowds of men and women of every rank who flocked thither to hear him was the young student, Æneas Silvius. The saint, like Æneas himself, came of a noble Sienese family. He too had been a student of the University, and had received his friar's habit in the Church of S. Francesco at Siena. Thus his antecedents alone were sufficient to attract Æneas towards S. Bernardino, and once having been drawn to him he fell completely beneath his spell. "He was most eloquent in speech," writes Æneas of the great revivalist preacher, "and could move men to tears in a wonderful way; he so denounced vices that he made every one feel a horror of them, and he so praised virtues that he made all love them. . . . And because his life was holy and without blemish, because he lived in poverty, going about with bare feet, clad only in his woollen tunic; and because he

persevered in fasts and prayers, he drew the people marvellously.”¹

All Siena responded to S. Bernardino's appeal. The women brought their ornaments and cosmetics, their false hair and fine clothes to swell the pyres of “vanities” which were kindled on the Piazza. Party symbols and badges were torn down, and in their place appeared “the Holy Name of Jesus painted on a picture,”² surrounded by the sun's golden rays. Æneas himself was so much moved by the saint's words that he seriously contemplated entering the Franciscan Order, and was only turned from his purpose by the entreaties of his friends. A few years later, when S. Bernardino had left Siena for Rome, Æneas was troubled by a saying of one of his disciples, to the effect that a man was bound to accomplish any good deed that he had once willed to do. In his distress of mind Æneas trudged all the way to Rome to consult S. Bernardino, who with characteristic good sense told him that his scruples were groundless, and that his transient aspiration placed him under no necessity of becoming a friar against his better judgment.³

Æneas was entirely unsuited for the religious life, yet he had much real religious feeling. He was also quick to recognise genuine goodness, and S. Bernardino's life of self-sacrifice appealed at once to all that was noblest in his nature. Perhaps the three men for whom he showed the most abiding admiration were S. Bernardino, the prophet of his student-days; Cesarini, the hero of the Council of Basel, who died a martyr's death on the battlefield of Varna; and the austere and saintly Cardinal Carvajal, who spent his life in the championship of the cause of Christendom against the Turk. If any one characteristic distinguished all three men alike, it was their singleness of purpose—a virtue which Æneas, whose sincerity has been

¹ Æneas Silvius, *De Viris Ætate sua claris* (printed in Mansi, *Pii Secundi Orationes*, vol. iii. p. 172).

² *De Viris*, p. 173.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 174-5.

so often doubted, prized above others. S. Bernardino's influence, however, was literary as well as spiritual. He was a born story-teller, whose rich humour and native gift of oratory delighted Æneas's artistic sense. Some of our hero's earliest lessons in the art of public speaking were learned at the feet of the preaching friar, and the name of S. Bernardino must be joined with that of Sozzini among the strongest factors in the intellectual development of Æneas Silvius.

Did Æneas owe any part of his education to the greatest scholar of his day, Francesco Filelfo? The question is wrapped in obscurity, and the entire disregard for truth which distinguishes humanist controversy makes the problem peculiarly hard to solve. On the one hand Filelfo, writing a year after Pius II's death,¹ tries to give the impression that the deceased Pope owed everything to him, and that he had been guilty of the basest ingratitude towards his old master. He describes Æneas coming to Florence as a poor scholar, and says that he was so greatly impressed by the young man's ability and charm that he received him into his own house. He subsequently found him a post with a rich Sicilian noble, in whose service Æneas received 40 ducats a year, and was thus able to attend Filelfo's private classes as well as his public lectures. Finally, Filelfo asserts, Æneas went to Milan with introductions from him, entered the service of the Bishop of Novara, and so passed in the Bishop's train to his future career at the Council of Basel. Goro Lolli, on the other hand, meets Filelfo's whole story with a blank denial.² Æneas never was Filelfo's pupil, and he did not even visit Florence until his student-days were over. Thus it was useless to talk of ingratitude, and, for his part, he maintained that death was Pius II's sole crime from Filelfo's point of view. He had sung the Pope's praises so long as

¹ *Francisci Filelfi Epistolae*, lib. ii. ep. 26, To Leodrisio Crivelli (Venet. 1502).

² *Cardinalis Papiensis Epistolae*, Ep. 47.

there was hope of gain from him, and only since his decease had he begun to abuse him. There are obvious misstatements in Filelfo's story. Æneas, to take but one instance, did not go to Basel from Milan with the Bishop of Novara, but from Siena with Cardinal Capranica. Yet it seems impossible to accept Lolli's version in view of Filelfo's letter of recommendation written in 1431, before the days of controversy, and which Rosmini regards as an incontrovertible proof that Æneas was at one time Filelfo's pupil.¹ "The bearer of my letter," writes Filelfo to his friend Niccolò Arcimboldi in Milan, "is a Sienese youth, Æneas Silvius by name, of good family and most dear to me, not only because he has been my pupil for two years, but also because of his keen intelligence and grace of expression. His manners are polished and refined. He is moved by a desire to see Milan, and I commend him to you with the utmost goodwill. Whatever you can do for him in the way of service or aid, I shall regard as done to myself."² Even here we cannot accept Filelfo's account without reservation. Apart from certain difficulties in the reconciliation of dates, and from the absence of all mention of the fact in Æneas's writings, it is hard to believe that he could have studied for two years under the chief Greek scholar of the day without learning the rudiments of the language. Perhaps the solution of the problem lies in the supposition that Æneas concluded his University career by a wandering tour to other centres of learning in Italy, visiting Florence among the rest. He would thus have made the acquaintance of Filelfo, Poggio, Bruni, and other Florentine scholars, while it would be quite in accordance with humanist tradition that Filelfo should give introductions to a promising young student who had attended some of his lectures without being in any real sense his pupil. The theory finds support in a letter from Æneas to Giovanni Aurispa, dating from the latter part of 1431, in

¹ Rosmini, *Vita di Francesco Filelfo*, vol. ii. pp. 104-9 (Milano, 1808).

² *Francisci Philelfi Epistolae*, lib. ii. ep. 8, *op. cit.*

which he thanks the great man for the kindness which he showed him during a short sojourn at Ferrara on his way from Padua to Siena. "I found in you so much courtesy," runs the letter, "so much charity and kindliness, even in the smallest matters, that I do not think anyone could be kinder or more gracious; and you were willing to number me also among your friends."¹ Æneas's relations with Filelfo may well have been of the same transient nature, and the tour which ended at Padua and Ferrara may have begun at Florence and Milan.

At this period Æneas was engaged nominally in legal studies. A fellow-student, one Aliotti, gives his recollections of him at Siena between 1425 and 1430, when Æneas was reputed the ablest of the students in Civil Law, and had already begun to lecture on the subject.² Yet the more he came in contact with them, the greater was his antipathy both for law and lawyers. All time seemed wasted that was spent apart from his beloved "poets and orators." His period of wandering, with the glimpse that it afforded him of the great world of letters, only increased his restlessness. The spirit of the Renaissance was hot within his veins, and the prospect of spending the remainder of his existence as a petty notary, or at best as a lecturer on Jurisprudence, at Siena, grew well-nigh intolerable. Nevertheless, the time had come when he must settle down to a professional career. His relations were already impatient at the delay, and no way of escape seemed open to him. At this critical moment there passed through Siena, Cardinal Domenico Capranica, Bishop of Fermo, on his way to the Council of Basel. He was in need of a secretary, and offered to take the brilliant young scholar into his service. To Æneas the opportunity seemed heaven-sent. Instead of work which he hated, here was work that gave scope for the exercise of those gifts of style and oratory which he had already proved himself to possess. New surroundings and

¹ Æneas Silvius to Giovanni Aurispa (Wolkan, Ep. 2).

² Aliotti, *Ep. et Opusc.*, vol. ii. p. 349. Cf. Lesca, p. 49.

fresh experiences would take the place of the familiar round of life in Siena. He would exchange an assured livelihood, and little prospect beyond it, for adventure, insecurity, and boundless possibilities. For a man of Æneas's age and disposition there could be no hesitation as to his choice. One day in the winter of 1431-2 he rode out of Siena in the train of Cardinal Capranica, intent upon the conquest of the unknown future which awaited him beyond the blue hills of the Sienese *contado*.

CHAPTER II

TRAVELS AND SECRETARYSHIPS

THE departure of Æneas Silvius for the Council of Basel has been immortalised in one of Pintoricchio's most charming frescoes in the Piccolomini Library at Siena. Amid a gay and richly apparelled company he rides towards the seashore. The Cardinal's red robes and the bright trappings of the horses glow in the sunlight. The way is strewn with a veritable carpet of spring flowers. Æneas himself is mounted on a prancing white charger, and he turns with light-hearted unconcern to cast a farewell glance over his native land. Behind him, however, the sea is troubled, and a black storm darkens the horizon, warning the travellers who are about to embark upon the waiting vessels that there is rough weather in store for them. The symbolism of the fresco leaves little to be desired. In the springtime of life, full of hope and enthusiasm, Æneas set out upon his career. Fortune had provided him with an opportunity, and in his joy at this sign of her favour, he was blind to the dangers and difficulties which would inevitably beset his path. "A wise God conceals the future in dark night,"¹ he wrote on a later occasion. If he had realised the endless vicissitudes through which he must pass before he could achieve, not greatness, but the merest security, perhaps even his adventurous spirit would have faltered.

The actual circumstances of Æneas's departure were doubtless less picturesque, yet the tempest of Pintoricchio's

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 7.



ÆNEAS SILVIUS SETS OUT FOR THE COUNCIL OF BASEL

Fresco by PINTORICCHIO

Piccolomini Library, Siena

fresco is a truthful representation of the storms, both physical and political, to which he was exposed at the very outset of his career. Two main facts coloured his introduction to the world of politics. In the first place, his new master, Cardinal Capranica, had been involved in the recent rising of the Colonna against Eugenius IV, and his departure from Italy was practically a flight before the Pope's vengeance. Secondly, the Council of Basel, whither he was proceeding, was sitting in defiance of Papal authority, having been dissolved by Eugenius in the autumn of 1431, just four months after its formal opening. Under these circumstances Capranica's chief object was to get out of the country as quickly and as inconspicuously as possible. He resolved to proceed straight to the coast at Piombino, and from thence to take ship to Genoa. By so doing he would avoid passing through Florentine territory at a time when a war between Florence and Siena rendered travelling difficult; and, once in Genoa, he could rely upon the protection of her overlord, Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan, a friend to all enemies of the Pope. When the party reached the coast they found an obstacle in their path in the shape of Jacopo Appiano, Lord of Piombino, who thought it politic to prevent Capranica's departure. "Although he feigned friendship," writes Æneas, "he forbade Domenico to take ship."¹ Yet with the vessel which was to carry him to Genoa waiting out at sea before his eyes, Capranica determined to persevere. Making his way secretly down to the shore, he embarked in a small boat with a single companion and was conveyed to his own ship in safety. "Once this was known, the rest of Domenico's suite was allowed to depart, the lord of the town thinking it useless to pursue the feathers when the body of his prey had escaped him."² Æneas and his companions, however, spent a night out of doors on the island of Elba, in bitter cold, before they were able to rejoin Capranica. The next day the reunited household set sail for Genoa.

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 3.

² *Loc. cit.*

Even then the adventures of the journey were not over. A severe storm arose which drove the vessel far out of its course, "round Corsica and a part of Sardinia,"¹ and after a night of tossing on the high seas the captain made his way back through the Straits of Bonifacio to seek shelter in the harbour of Porto Venere. This unpleasant experience gave Æneas a distaste for the sea which never left him. It also found him a lifelong friend in the person of one of his fellow-secretaries, Piero da Noceto, who shared the perils of the voyage, and became henceforth his closest companion. The episode appears to have made a deep impression on Æneas, and time helped to magnify its importance. In the *Commentaries* we read that the travellers "were driven by furious storms in sight of the Lybian coast, the sailors fearing greatly lest they should land at some barbarian port; although it is marvellous to relate and almost incredible to hear that a voyage of a day and a night from Italy . . . should have taken them to Africa, it is nevertheless true."² The *Commentaries* were written some thirty years after the events here described, and a comparison between them and the account of his journey which Æneas wrote to the Podestà of Piombino directly he reached Genoa shows that the story grew with the telling.³ This letter contains no mention of Africa, and the perils of the voyage sink into insignificance beside the splendours of the reception which awaited the travellers.

At Porto Venere they found an armed galley sent by the Duke of Milan to escort Capranica to Genoa. The ducal Commissary and a goodly company of citizens were on board, and on the Cardinal's approach there was a great sounding of trumpets and other musical instruments to do him honour. "The shouts of the sailors

¹ Æneas Silvius to Tommaso della Gazzia, Podestà of Piombino, Genoa, 28 Feb. 1432 (printed for the first time by Wolkan, Ep. 4).

² *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 3.

³ Cf. above, Wolkan, Ep. 4.

resounded to heaven,"¹ wrote Æneas, who was sharing for the first time in the incidents of greatness. After three days' delay, on account of bad weather, the galley rode into the harbour at Genoa, where Capranica was met by the Governor and escorted to the sumptuous lodgings prepared for his reception. Here the chief citizens came to pay their respects, bringing with them such quantities of "sweet wines, grain, and spices of every kind that fifty men could hardly carry the whole amount."² To one reared in the comparative simplicity of Tuscan society Genoa—rich, luxurious, Eastern in her magnificence, and cosmopolitan in her atmosphere—seemed a veritable city of enchantment. "I wish you were with me now, for you would see a town that has not its like in the whole world."³ These are the opening words of a description of Genoa sent by Æneas to a Sienese friend. It forms the first of a long series of sketches containing his impressions of persons and places, and embodying all that is best and most characteristic in his literary work.

Naturally, Æneas's attention is first arrested by Genoa as a great mercantile port. He dwells in amazement on the splendid harbour, crowded with ships, and on the constant coming and going of trading craft. "Every day you may see different races of men, with strange and uncivilised manners, and merchants arriving with every kind of wares."⁴ The Genoese are a seafaring race, and there is no hardship or peril that they will not endure in pursuit of their calling. Yet they are too much occupied with buying and selling to care greatly for learning. For the rest, they are "honest people, with long bodies, and grave demeanour, who both seem and are proud."⁵ The private life of the citizens, in contrast to their arduous profession, is luxurious and even voluptuous. "They fall into no error

¹ Wolkan, Ep. 4.

² *Loc. cit.*

³ Æneas Silvius to Andreozio Petrucci, Milan, 24 March 1432 (printed for the first time by Wolkan, Ep. 6).

⁴ Wolkan, Ep. 6, p. 7.

⁵ Wolkan, Ep. 6, p. 8.

who call Genoa a women's Paradise." ¹ Women of all classes enjoy extraordinary freedom. "They wear sumptuous clothes, and are loaded with gold, silver, and precious stones. . . . There is no need for them to ply the needle or the distaff, for every household has numerous female slaves who have charge of the cooking and sewing." ² Æneas had even heard of a lady, by no means of the highest rank, who, when asked by her son-in-law what she was providing for dinner, replied that she had not entered her kitchen for seven years. In the absence of domestic duties the women gave themselves up to dressing and love-making, and a close observer of Genoese society would soon perceive that the basis of the whole fabric was the latter art. In short, "if Venus lived in these days she would no longer inhabit Cyprus . . . or the groves of Idalium, but would dwell in Genoa." ³ As regards outward appearance, Æneas considered Genoa "as far superior to Florence as Florence is to Arezzo." "O most fortunate city!" he says in conclusion. "One thing alone is lacking to her, and that is concord among her citizens; but so great is the dissension among men that they seem to watch for opportunities of conspiring against, killing, and injuring one another. All have the same object, namely, to hurt, to slay, to plunder, and to drive into exile." ⁴

Æneas was obviously enjoying his first taste of the great world, and he dwelt joyfully on the thought that a still more magnificent reception was being prepared for his master in Milan. Yet other letters show that pleasure was mingled with a good deal of home-sickness. "When we were together," he wrote to a University friend, "no day was allowed to pass without intercourse between us; either I sought you out or you came to find me, so that I seemed to be living with you more than with all the others. Now your letters perform the function that was once yours, . . . from them I derive such consolation as falls to my lot.

¹ Wolkan, Ep. 6, p. 8.

³ *Loc. cit.*

² Wolkan, Ep. 6, p. 9.

⁴ Wolkan, Ep. 6, p. 10.

The gods are my witness that when I read them I cannot restrain my tears. I weep and weep again. 'Where,' I cry, 'is my sweetest friend?' I know too well that I am parted from him, I know not when I shall see him again." Most especially is he grieved to hear how much his father misses him. Giorgio must regard himself as Silvio's adopted son, so that the old man may gain a comforter, and Æneas a brother. "Farewell," he concludes, "and again farewell. Greet, I pray you, all our mutual friends, and when you meet my father console him as much as you can."¹ This letter formed Æneas's farewell to Italy, being written in Milan on the eve of his departure. A few days later the Cardinal and his household set out over "the Alps that are called S. Gothard, fast bound in ice and snow,"² and after traversing "steep mountains reaching almost to heaven," they came at last to Basel.

Æneas entered Basel in the spring of 1432, but it was not until four years later that he began to take active part in the proceedings of the Council. During the period that intervened he was engaged in seeing life, under diverse aspects and amid varying scenes. He served at least four different masters, and thus gained considerable experience of a secretary's post in the household of a great ecclesiastic. In this capacity, moreover, he travelled over the greater part of Europe, crossing the Alps in his journeys to and from Italy by the S. Gothard, the S. Bernard, and the Simplon passes, going from Basel to Cologne by way of the Rhine, visiting the rich trading cities of the Low Countries, and penetrating even to the British Isles. Wherever he went eyes and ears were on the alert, and these early impressions did much to furnish material for the great historical and geographical works which are among his chief titles to fame. More than this, the four years of wandering gave Æneas just that varied knowledge of men

¹ Æneas Silvius to Giorgio Andrenzio, Milan, March 1432 (Wolkan, Ep. 7; *Opera* (Basel, 1571), Ep. 33, and elsewhere).

² *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 3.

and things which he needed in order to give expression to his natural gifts. As an Italian, he belonged to the nation of explorers, to those early seekers after knowledge who prepared the way for the great discoveries of a later generation. As a humanist, the history and manners of the European nations were interesting to him in a way that they had never been to the mediævalist. Above all, a keen sense of beauty, exceptional powers of observation, and an instinct for self-expression which impelled him to commit his ideas to writing, enabled him to turn all that he saw and heard to the very best advantage. "Thousands," it has been said, "saw what he did, but they felt no impulse to make a picture of it, and were unconscious that the world desired such pictures."¹ Those who are anxious for a personally conducted tour round Europe in the early fifteenth century cannot do better than to take him as their guide, and to follow him as he passes from city to city, full of interest, full of appreciation, bringing his quick sympathy and vivid imagination to bear upon everything that crosses his path.

Capranica received a warm welcome from the Fathers at Basel, and his claim to rank as a Cardinal, which the Pope had refused to acknowledge, was at once recognised by the Council. Eugenius iv, meanwhile, retained possession of Capranica's benefices and also of his private inheritance, and the Council which had so gladly reinstated him in his position could do nothing to help him recover his property. Thus the unfortunate Cardinal found himself in great pecuniary straits. "The needy Domenico was not able to support the needy Æneas,"² and our hero had perforce to seek a new master. Not long after, Capranica left Basel and made his peace with Eugenius iv. He had done his part by Æneas in launching him upon the world, and, in his lifetime, he hardly crossed his path again. In 1458, however, popular opinion regarded him as the

¹ Burckhardt, *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien*.

² *Cardinalis Papiensis Epistolae*, Ep. 47, p. 495.

future Pope, and his death on 14 August removed the most formidable obstacle to Pius II's election.

Æneas next took service under Nicodemo della Scala, Bishop of Freisingen, who gave him his first glimpse of German politics by taking him to the Diet of Frankfort. In later years he must have said to himself that this preliminary experience had been eminently characteristic, for the proceedings of the Diet were rendered abortive by the absence of the Emperor. Shortly after their return to Basel, Nicodemo withdrew from the Council, and Æneas was left without employment. It was probably at this time that he conceived the idea of writing a History of the Council, being led to his decision by the reasons so naïvely expressed in his letter to Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini. "Nothing," he considered, "could be worse for a man than to lead a life of ease and idleness,"¹ and nothing could be more foreign to his own habit, as he had always been accustomed to spend his time in reading and writing. Thus it was a weariness to him to spend the long days at Basel in idleness, and he did not care to gossip about the doings of the Council with people who took no real interest in ecclesiastical affairs. He resolved, therefore, to set to work upon a History, lest he should become "like the beasts, given over to food and sleep." "I confess," he writes, "that it would be better and more becoming in me to turn over and study the volumes of those who wrote in past ages than to attempt original work. Yet I have sufficient excuse in that I possess no books." In recording the deeds of the Council as they come to his knowledge he will be exercising such little talent as he possesses, so that when the time comes for him to write something more important, wisdom and facility of expression will be his. "Both these things," he observes, "are acquired by practice, although it is true that wisdom is given to many by nature." There follows a

¹ Æneas Silvius to Giuliano Cesarini (Wolkan, Ep. 16). Dated by Wolkan, Milan, July 1434. The letter is also printed by Urstisius, *Epitome Historiae Basiliensis*.

graphic description of Basel and its inhabitants, which was intended to serve as an introduction to his History, so that all might know "in what place and among what people those things were done that I propose to record."

The situation of Basel made it peculiarly suitable in our hero's eyes for the seat of a General Council. Almost equidistant from Spain and Hungary, from Denmark and Sicily, it might be considered the centre of Christendom.¹ It lay, moreover, on that great highway of Europe, the Rhine, which divided the city into two parts. A fine wooden bridge gave access from one part to the other, but in spring, when the stream was swollen by the melting snows of the Alps, the bridge was often destroyed, and Basel became two separate cities. To Tuscan-bred Æneas, the three most noticeable features of Basel were the extreme cold, the comfort and prosperity which reigned everywhere, and the excellence of the municipal government. In winter, when snow lay thick on the ground, the blast of the north wind seemed freezing, but within doors all was warmth and comfort. The principal houses had fine halls resembling Roman baths, where the citizens entertained one another at dinner, and where caged singing-birds and sparkling fountains charmed the senses. The tables were laden with silver; the furniture was of the richest. In short, although built for convenience rather than for outward show, the houses of Basel could vie with the best in Florence as regards interior equipment. The fortifications of the city seemed to Æneas inadequate, and altogether unfitted to withstand the sieges and street-fights of Italy. Yet in this more fortunate country "the strength of the city lay in concord of souls."² In Basel there was no struggle between nobles and people; no voice was raised against the government; no factions divided the ruling class; all were prepared to defend their liberties, if

¹ Æneas Silvius to Philippe de Coetquis, Archbishop of Tours, Basel, 28 Oct. 1438 (a later version of his letter to Cesarini), Wolkan, Ep. 28.

² Wolkan, Ep. 16.

need be, with their lives. So strong and sure was justice that "those exiled from the city in perpetuity had no hope of return," and if anyone deserved punishment, "neither money nor prayers would avail him, nor even a multitude of friends and relations, nor high position in the city." Although reluctant to lay bare the weaknesses of his own country, Æneas could not refrain from drawing the all too obvious contrast. "There the few seek to rule, and all are forced to obey; those who spurn the authority of King or Emperor are subject to the lowest of the people. There no dominion is lasting, and nowhere does fortune jest as in Italy."¹ With regard to the inhabitants of Basel, they preferred for the most part "to be men of substance rather than to seem so."² They dressed soberly, were contented with their lot, and kept their promises. Their standard of culture was low. Grammar and dialectic were studied, but poetry was despised, and the name of Cicero was not so much as heard. Religion was held in high honour, the churches being frequented daily, and not only on festivals. Æneas's quick eye at once noticed the high wooden pews which filled the churches, each matron shutting herself in her own pew with her maid-servants "like bees in a hive." This peculiar custom he attributed rather to "the rigour of winter" than to reasons of prudery. His interest was also awakened by the annual tax due from every family to the Bishop, a relic, he considered, of the day when Basel was subject to episcopal government.

Before Æneas had time to write much of his History he found employment once more, as secretary to Bartolomeo Visconti, Bishop of Novara. The Bishop had come to Basel as the confidential agent of the Duke of Milan, his chief task being to stir up trouble for Eugenius IV at the Council, while Filippo Maria himself waged war upon the Pope in Italy. The successful negotiation of this joint

¹ Wolkan, Ep. 28.

² Wolkan, Ep. 16: "viri boni esse potius quam videri malunt."

campaign needed frequent intercourse between its directors, and thus it came about that the close of the year 1433 saw Æneas back in Italy.¹ He spent some time at the Court of Milan, and gained an insight into the character of "that great and famous Duke, Filippo Maria." "Filippo was full of suspicion," wrote Æneas, "and hardly trusted even himself. He would often search the hangings of his palace walls, thinking that assassins were hidden there, and at times he was terrified by his own shadow. He fled the sight of man, but was nevertheless great, and renowned for his liberality and magnificence."² To our hero this visit was chiefly remarkable for the part which he played in the appointment of the Rector of the University of Pavia. Of the two rival candidates, one was a certain Luigi Crotti, a Milanese of high birth and powerful connections, the other was an obscure citizen of Novara. Æneas espoused the cause of the latter, and spoke with so much eloquence that he snatched the prize from Crotti's grasp, and saw his candidate installed as Rector.³

Meanwhile, Filippo Maria's captains besieged Rome, calling themselves "Generals of the Holy Council." In 1434 they contrived to stir up rebellion within the city, and Eugenius was forced to fly to Florence. Not content with having humbled his enemy thus far, the Duke of Milan now designed to obtain possession of the Pope's person. The Bishop of Novara was sent to Florence to arrange the details of the conspiracy, and all was in order when the plot was discovered. It seemed likely that the Bishop's life would be forfeit, "and the shepherd being smitten, the sheep were scattered."⁴ Æneas and his terrified companions fled for protection to the nearest church,

¹ He travelled from Basel to Milan and back more than once at this period. On 17 Nov. 1433 he writes from Milan that he hopes soon to be in Basel, and on 1 July 1434 from the same place that he has just arrived from the seat of the Council (Wolkan, Ep. 14 and Ep. 15).

² Fea, *Pius II a calumniis vindicatus*, p. 40.

³ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 3.

⁴ Mansi, *Pius II Orationes*, vol. iii., *De Viris Ætate sua claris*, p. 148.

fearing every moment that they might be dragged away to prison and torture. Our hero is careful to mention that his master had kept him in ignorance of the whole matter, "not wishing to consult a Tuscan about a Tuscan affair."¹ Yet, in another place,² he tells us that he was able to visit his relations at this time, through being sent on a mission to Niccolò Piccinino, who was taking baths at Siena. It is difficult to believe that his business with the principal soldier in the employ of Milan had not some connection with the Florentine conspiracy. Whatever was the extent of his complicity, Æneas was placed in a most unenviable predicament. Fortunately for his future career, a helping hand was stretched out to him by his friend Piero da Noceto. After the break-up of Capranica's household, Piero had taken service with Cardinal Albergata, a Carthusian who combined monkish piety with enthusiasm for the new learning. Albergata was generous in his patronage of struggling scholars, and on Piero's recommendation he offered Æneas a post as secretary. Thus the taint of recent associations was at once obliterated, and Æneas left Florence, no longer in the service of Eugenius IV's enemies, but safe under the protection of a champion of orthodoxy, and the Pope's most loyal servant. Soon after, the Bishop of Novara was set at liberty, but Æneas preferred the superior attractions of a Cardinal's household, and did not return to his service. Yet he bore his former master no grudge. He writes of him with respect and affection, and has a place for him in his collection of biographical sketches of the illustrious men of the age.

Cardinal Albergata, meanwhile, was bound for the Congress of Arras, which had been summoned in the hope of ending the Hundred Years War and of giving peace to the distracted land of France. He crossed the Alps by the S. Bernard Pass, and descended upon the Lake of Geneva,

¹ Mansi, *Pius II Orationes*, vol. iii., *De Viris Ætate sua claris*, p. 148.

² *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 3.

where he turned aside in order to visit Duke Amadeus VIII of Savoy in his retreat at Ripaille. In 1431, after a reign of forty years, Duke Amadeus had startled Europe by retiring from the world. With six chosen companions, all of noble birth and widowers like himself, he had withdrawn to an estate upon the shores of the Lake of Geneva, in order to lead a hermit's life amid beautiful and peaceful surroundings. Thus the royal hermit of Ripaille was a subject of popular interest at the moment, and Æneas, with the instincts of a true journalist, was at pains to describe all that he saw in the course of his visit. Albergata was met at the landing-stage by Amadeus and his companions, clad in long grey cloaks, with gold crosses upon their breasts and staffs in their hands. Hard by stood the church which Amadeus had built, with suitable dwellings for the priests who served it. Behind stretched a magnificently wooded park, the home of deer and other wild creatures, screened from the outside world by a high wall. In this romantic setting hermit and Cardinal met and embraced, "kissing each other with much affection." To Æneas it seemed "a worthy spectacle, which posterity will hardly believe." Only lately Amadeus had been "a most powerful Prince, feared by both French and Italians. He had been clad in cloth of gold, and surrounded by purple-robed courtiers; ensigns of royalty were carried before him, armed cohorts and a crowd of great ones followed him. Now he received the Apostolic Legate in humble and poor array, preceded by six hermits, and followed by a few priests."¹ Albergata could not say enough in praise of Amadeus's renunciation, but when the party passed through the pleasant glades to the castle where these "Knights of S. Maurice" had made their home, Æneas began to suspect the sincerity of their motives. Each of the six companions had his separate suite of rooms, fitted up with the greatest luxury. As to the apartments of Amadeus, they were worthy of the Pope himself,

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. vii. p. 181.

and the whole Order seemed to live "a life of pleasure rather than of penance."¹ In the course of the visit Æneas noticed his friend Piero writing in charcoal upon a wall of the castle. The words which he wrote were those of Cicero: "Totius autem injustitiæ, nulla capitalior est quam eorum qui cum maxime fallunt, id agunt, ut viri boni esse videantur."² Piero's judgment was perhaps unnecessarily severe, yet the Duke's renunciation of the world did not by any means involve a surrender of worldly comfort. His piety, moreover, did not stand in the way of cautious concern for his own interests, as Æneas was to learn by experience a few years later, when Amadeus left his hermitage, at the request of the Council of Basel, to embark upon the final phase of his career as the anti-Pope, Felix v.

Bidding farewell to Ripaille, Albergata and his household came to Basel, and from thence, in June 1435, they set out for Arras. The journey from Basel to Cologne was performed by boat, and, as the company proceeded by easy stages down the Rhine, Æneas gained his first impression of the stately cities which he described in such glowing terms, years later, in his *Germania*. At Strassburg he found "so much splendour and beauty that it has, not without good cause, been endowed with the name of Argentina."³ The canals which intersected the city reminded him of Venice, although Strassburg was "healthier and pleasanter, the waters which traverse it being fresh and clear, instead of salt and evil-smelling as at Venice." At Speyer he was chiefly interested in the noble Cathedral with the tombs of the Emperors, among which he particularly noticed that of Rudolf of Hapsburg, "who is held to be the founder of the Austrian house." "Worms," he wrote, "is not a

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 3.

² "Of all unrighteousness, none is greater than that of men who, when they err most, behave so that they appear to be virtuous" (Cicero, *De Offic.* i. 13; Æneas Silvius, *De Viris*, Mansi, vol. iii. p. 179).

³ *Germania*, p. 1052 (Æneas Silvius, *Opera quæ extant omnia*, Basel, 1571).

large town, yet no one can deny that it is delightful." His historical mind at once associated it with the famous Concordat on the investiture question, made there in 1122. The ancient city of Mainz possessed "magnificent churches, and exceptionally fine public and private buildings." Nothing in it seemed to him amiss, save the extreme narrowness of the streets. His highest praise, however, is reserved for Cologne. As a humanist he hailed it as "Colonia Agrippina," named after the mother of Nero; he revered it as a Christian on account of the bones of the Magi enshrined in the Cathedral. "Noble in its churches and houses, eminent in its citizens, famed for its wealth, . . . adorned by public buildings and fortified by towers, it sports upon the banks of the Rhine surrounded by smiling meadows. . . . In all Europe you will find nothing grander or fairer."¹ From Cologne the travellers took horse to Aachen, the ancient crowning-place of the German kings, riding from thence through the prosperous trading cities of the Low Countries, Liège, Louvain, Douay, and Tournay, until they came at last to Arras.²

At Arras, Æneas found himself among a brilliant and numerous company. Almost all the chief States of Europe sent representatives to the Congress. Albergata himself came as Papal Legate, Cardinal Hugh of Lusignan represented the Council of Basel, and some nine thousand strangers thronged the streets. The most conspicuous figure of the assembly was Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, then in the prime of his manhood. All knew that the issue of the Congress turned on him. If he decided to renounce the English alliance and to make his peace with the King of France, the war would lose half its terrors, while the end could be only a question of time. In the intervals of the negotiations the members of the Congress sought relaxation in banquets and tournaments, and here the Duke of Burgundy surpassed himself in courtesy and affability. Only the English stood sullenly aloof from

¹ *Germania*, p. 1052, *op. cit.*

² *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 4.

the gay doings, seeing in Burgundy's efforts to court popularity with his fellow-countrymen the signs of his approaching reconciliation with the Crown. Hardly less noticeable than the mutual hatred of Burgundians and English was the rivalry between Albergata and Cardinal Hugh of Lusignan.¹ They would only meet in the presence of a mediator, and each sought to outdo the other in dispensing privileges and indulgences. From the point of view of birth the advantage lay with Lusignan, but Albergata's wisdom and sincerity won the confidence of the Congress. He was admitted to secret conferences from which his rival was excluded, and he it was who brought about the final reconciliation between Burgundy and the French king. This took place on 21 September 1435, and Æneas marked the occasion by addressing to the Duke of Burgundy some verses upon the blessings of peace.² Our hero, however, was not in Arras on this auspicious occasion. He had already departed on a mission to James I of Scotland, "in order to stir up the King against the neighbouring Britons, who were opposed to the peace."³ Æneas himself describes the purport of his mission as "the restoration of a certain Bishop to the royal favour,"⁴ but it seems likely that this was a mere pretext, and that Albergata wished to avert a renewal of hostilities in France by providing employment for the English on the Scottish Border. Whatever was the cause of the embassy, it was the first independent task entrusted to Æneas, and he welcomed it with enthusiasm. Posterity, too, has cause to rejoice over the circumstances which brought Great Britain and its inhabitants beneath the eye of this gifted observer.

Our hero's adventures began at Calais. The English not unnaturally regarded Cardinal Albergata "with

¹ Cf. Voigt, *Enea Silvio de Piccolomini als Papst Pius II und sein Zeitalter*, vol. i. p. 89.

² *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 4.

³ Campanus, *Vita Pii* (Æneas Silvius, *Opera*, etc.).

⁴ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 4.

peculiar hatred because he had lured the Duke of Burgundy from their side,"¹ and the appearance of his secretary in Calais at once aroused suspicion. He was detained in his lodging, and not allowed either to go on or to turn back.² Deliverance came through no less a person than Cardinal Beaufort—himself returning from Arras—and thanks to the great man's timely aid, Æneas crossed to England without further mishap. Beaufort's friendliness may be accounted for by his championship of the peace party among the English, but on the other side of the Channel, as Æneas found to his cost, a very different spirit prevailed. The cry of the hour was for vengeance upon the promoters of the Peace of Arras, and Cardinal Albergata's secretary was refused letters of safe-conduct to Scotland. The only thing to be done was to retrace his steps, sad at heart to think that he had braved the perils of the sea in vain. "But," to quote his own words, "he was glad to have seen the most wealthy and populous city of London, and the noble church of S. Paul's, and the splendid tombs of the kings; and the river Thames, which ebbs back from the sea more quickly than it flows into it, and is spanned by a bridge which resembles a city; and the village in which report has it that men are born with tails; and (that which obscures the fame of all else) the golden shrine of S. Thomas of Canterbury, covered with diamonds, pearls, and carbuncles, where they consider it a crime to offer any baser material than silver."³ In the sacristy of S. Paul's he was shown a Latin translation

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 4.

² A sixteenth-century writer, Antonio de Beatis, comments on the difficulty which travellers experienced in getting in and out of Calais, owing to the rigid rules which prevailed with regard to the closing of the solitary gate: "La porta che è una solamente se apre ad tal tempo ad due hore di giorno, et la sera se serra ad hora di cena, zoè ad xxii hore, nè se apre, se ce andasse el re in persona, in fine al giorno sequente in l'hora predicta; et similmente sta serrata la matina finchè le gente pransano" (Pastor, *Die Reise des Kardinals Luigi d'Aragona*, 1517-8, pp. 122-3).

³ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 4.

of Thucydides, dating from the ninth century, which interested him greatly. The name of the translator was not given, but "he must without doubt have been a learned man to have been able to render that great and eloquent author in the Latin tongue with no less effect than in the original Greek."¹

After recrossing the Channel, Æneas made his way to Bruges, and from thence he embarked at Sluys on a vessel bound for Scotland. Once more he experienced ill-luck at sea. Two terrible storms arose and drove the ship in the direction of Norway, so far North that the sailors were no longer able to recognise the stars. At last "divine pity intervened, and caused the north wind to arise and blow the vessel towards land, so that on the twelfth day the coast of Scotland came in sight."² In the hour of peril Æneas vowed to walk barefoot to the nearest shrine of the Blessed Virgin if he should ever reach the shore. On landing at Dunbar he at once set off on a pilgrimage of ten miles to Whitkirk. The way lay thick with ice and snow, and when, after two hours spent at his devotions, he rose to depart, his bare feet were so numbed that they refused to carry him. Supported by his servants, he struggled to the nearest village, and in the process of the effort warmth and life returned to his frozen limbs. For the rest of his life, however, he was a victim to attacks of gout in the feet, which often caused him intense suffering.

Æneas met with a favourable reception from the Scottish monarch, and professed himself well satisfied with the result of his mission. The expenses of his journey were paid, and he received besides two horses and a valuable pearl, which last he determined to give to his mother. James I he describes as small and fat, with bright, flashing eyes, passionate and revengeful in disposition. He mentions his long captivity in England, from which he had

¹ Æneas Silvius to Johann Hinderbach, Vienna, June 1451 (*Opera*, Ep. 126, p. 652).

² *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 4.

returned with an English bride, the niece, or, as some said, the daughter of Cardinal Beaufort.¹ For the rest, Æneas gives a vivid if unpleasing description of this northern land.² It was a cold, barren, treeless country, and, in the winter months, daylight only lasted three or four hours. The towns had no walls; the houses were built without mortar and were roofed with turf. In the absence of wood, "a sulphurous stone, dug out of the earth," was used for fuel, and Æneas noticed half-naked beggars at the church doors, receiving this substance by way of alms. The people seemed to him poor and uncivilised; the men were small and bold, the women were fair, good-looking, and amorously disposed. So free were Scottish manners that kissing meant no more than did shaking hands in Italy. White bread and wine were regarded as delicacies, but meat and fish were to be had in abundance, and the oysters were finer than in England. Scottish horses were small and shaggy, and were never groomed or bridled. There were no wolves in the country. Scotland was divided into two parts, the cultivated and the forest land. The forest Scots spoke a different language from the others, and lived on the bark of trees. Nothing pleased the Scots so much as abuse of the English. During his stay in Scotland Æneas made inquiries about the far-famed barnacle tree which grew on the river banks, and bore fruit which became live birds as soon as they touched the water. "We learned," he writes, with a touch of sarcasm, "that the marvel had fled still farther, and that the famous tree must be sought, not in Scotland, but in the isle of Orkney."³

When the time came to leave Scotland, the captain of the ship in which he had sailed from Sluys offered him a passage back. But Æneas was too much alive to past dangers, and he determined to travel home by way of

¹ Æneas Silvius, *De Viris*, *op. cit.*, pp. 199-200.

² *Commentarii*, lib. i. pp. 4-5, and *Europa*, cap. 46 (*Opera*, pp. 387-471).

³ *Europa*, cap. 46, *op. cit.*

England. He preferred, he said, to make trial of the mercies of man than to trust himself to the sea. The ship set sail without him, and was wrecked within sight of land, all lives on board save four being lost. Awed by the catastrophe and thankful for his providential escape, Æneas started on his journey disguised as a merchant. He was ferried across the Tweed, and arrived at sunset in a large Northumbrian village, where the parish priest gave him a night's lodging. All the women of the village came to gaze at him as if he were a negro or an Indian, and they plied the priest with questions about his guest. Where had he come from? What was his business? Was he a Christian? The wine and white bread which Æneas had brought with him excited much interest, and so many people asked to be allowed a taste that the courteous Italian ended by having none left for himself. At night-fall all the male population took refuge in a neighbouring tower, lest they should be raided by the Scots. Æneas was left behind, as were also the women, with the assurance that the raiders would do them no harm. The whole company spent the night sitting round the watch-fire, the women cleaning hemp and chattering to Æneas's interpreter. Suddenly there was a violent barking of dogs and cackling of geese, and every one fled in terror. Æneas took refuge in a stable, but to his great relief the women soon returned, saying that it had been a false alarm. At last morning came, and with a thankful heart our hero bade farewell to the wild Border country, the like of which he had never seen before. The sight of the massive towers of Newcastle seemed to him like a return to the civilised world.

On his way south Æneas visited the tomb of the Venerable Bede at Durham, and then came to York, "where there is a church to be remembered throughout the world." What specially struck him were the "glass walls, held together by slender columns." The metaphor enables us to catch the impression which the vast windows of York

Minster left upon his mind. Later he fell in with one of the Justices in Eyre who was travelling to London, and who beguiled the way by discussing the Congress of Arras, denouncing Albergata as a wolf in sheep's clothing. "Who would not wonder at this trick of fortune?" our hero asks. "This man escorted Æneas in safety to London, but if he had known who his companion was he would have promptly cast him into prison."¹ At Dover, a judicious bribe to the harbour guards served him instead of a passport, and having crossed the Channel, he made his way back to Basel without further adventure. On his arrival he found that Albergata had left for Italy, and that Piero da Noceto was just setting out to rejoin his master.² Fearing an encounter with Eugenius IV, Æneas did not accompany him, and from that day forward his connection with Albergata was severed. The days of apprenticeship were now over; our hero entered upon a fresh phase of his career, as an independent agent at the Council of Basel.

Æneas has little to say of his life in ecclesiastical households, yet it may be assumed that he had not found it a bed of roses. The position of a secretary varied, according to the disposition of the master, between that of a son, a pupil, and a servant, but in all cases the discipline of the household bore at least a resemblance to that of the monastery. The master considered himself responsible for the general training of his subordinates; breaches of rule and moral delinquencies were punished with fasts, stripes, and imprisonment. Apart from the strict discipline to which they were subjected, the secretaries suffered from the common curse of community-life—petty rivalries and jealousies. "Believe me," wrote Æneas, "there is no harder lodging than a prince's court. Here strife, envy, calumny, hatred, contumely, and infinite ills find their home. And in the courts of ecclesiastics these things are

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 6.

² Cf. Æneas to Piero da Noceto, 7 May 1456 (*Opera*, Ep. 188, pp. 756-63).

worse, because those who dwell there are more highly educated, and many apply their ingenuity to evil rather than to good.”¹ The words form part of a letter of good advice to a young friend, holding a post in a Cardinal’s household, who had written in a high state of indignation over a three days’ fast imposed on him by his master. This youth—Gasparo Caccia by name—had been detected in helping to smuggle a woman of evil fame out of the Cardinal’s house. He considered the penance unjust because he was merely endeavouring to shield a friend—one Giacomo—who alone was responsible for the woman’s presence. If Gasparo expected sympathy, he was doomed to disappointment. He was the Cardinal’s servant, Æneas told him, eating his bread and drinking his wine; he had failed to respect his master’s honour and the latter had every right to punish. As to a three days’ fast, what was that to a strong young man? “Others if their servants had acted thus would have driven them from the house, or caused them to be beaten with rods.” Gasparo’s foolish complaints can only be the effect of “the excessive good-nature of the Cardinal, who indulges you and Giacomo too much.”

This letter was written when Æneas was approaching forty, a fact which may account for its severely moral tone. But the Cardinals whom he served were both strict disciplinarians, and he probably felt that, in his own days, he would not have escaped so lightly. Capranica was noted for the zeal with which he corrected the faults of his servants. Albergata, for his own part, kept the rule of the Carthusian Order throughout his Cardinalate, sleeping on straw, wearing a hair-shirt, and eating no meat. His household was ruled over for twenty years by Tommaso Parentucelli, the future Pope Nicholas v. Hard-working, narrow-minded, scrupulously correct in his manner of living, Parentucelli was a distinguished disciple of the new learning while possessing little of the true spirit of humanism. No

¹ Æneas Silvius to Gasparo Caccia, Vienna, 5 Oct. 1443 (Wolkan, Ep. 82; *Opera*, Ep. 16, and elsewhere).

one was less likely to understand the versatile, pleasure-loving Æneas. The two were destined to meet and work together on many future occasions. Yet, throughout their subsequent relations, there is a note of disapproval in Parentucelli's attitude which seems to tell of friction in bygone days, in the household of Cardinal Albergata.

Disadvantages notwithstanding, the four years of apprenticeship had given Æneas just the training which he needed. "A secretary," he wrote, "is one who knows how to choose his words, and put them together dexterously, who is versed in the art of soothing, or of exciting the passions, whose writings are adorned by elegance, humour, and learning, . . . who, in short, is able to express everything that comes within the scope of a letter briefly, elegantly, accurately, and wisely."¹ A "secretary alone," he concludes, "can render absent men present." Who was more capable of satisfying these requirements than Æneas Silvius, with his facile pen and his multifarious interests? He had, in truth, found his vocation, and his future triumphs were won, to a great extent, through the exercise of a secretary's craft upon a larger scale. Even to-day he is still the ideal secretary of his conception. His writings make the past live again, and render an absent age present to succeeding generations.

¹ Æneas Silvius, *Libellus Dialogorum de generalis Concilii autoritate*, p. 754 (Kollarii, *Analecta Monumentorum Vindobonensia*, vol. ii. pp. 691-790).

CHAPTER III

THE COUNCIL OF BASEL

FROM the point of view of history, the most enduring political achievement of Æneas Silvius was the restoration of the Papal power upon the ruins of the Council of Basel. Six momentous years of his life, however, were spent as the champion and pamphleteer of the Council in its most revolutionary phase. Thus from first to last our hero's career is closely associated with that effort to reform the Church from within which we call the conciliar movement. In order to understand Æneas as a politician it is necessary to grasp something of the significance of that movement, of the appeal which it made to the minds of the age, and of the inherent weakness which brought about its failure. His own connection with the movement passed through many stages. From a member of the moderate party he became a champion of the extreme anti-Papalists, and then an instrument in the downfall of his some-time allies. Finally, his political work as Pope consisted to a large extent in undoing the effects of the Council of Basel. The Compacts with the Hussites of Bohemia, the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges, and the declaration of German neutrality were alike fruits of the Council, and the reversal of all three measures was the work of Pius II.¹ Nevertheless, his apostasy is not so

¹ The Concordat of Vienna (1448), in which Germany made her peace with the Papacy, was, strictly speaking, the work of Nicholas v, but Æneas had a large share in the negotiations which preceded it, and the ecclesiastical policy embodied in the declaration of German neutrality was finally overthrown by Pius II.

black as it seems. When he first threw in his lot with the Council, there was good hope that it might effect a real reformation in the Church. When he severed his connection with it, that hope was lost. If Æneas had left Basel in 1438 instead of in 1442, his political career would have been free from inconsistency. But he remained for four years longer, at the sacrifice of his convictions, and in so doing he made a grave political mistake. The years of exile in Germany which followed, formed an appropriate penance for the last phase of his career at Basel.

During the troubled years of the fourteenth century, when Avignon usurped the rights of Rome and the Papal power seemed tied to the chariot wheels of France, when the efforts of S. Catherine of Siena to restore the Papacy to Rome only resulted in the deeper confusion of the Great Schism, men's minds turned to the conciliar theory as the panacea for the Church's ills. By this means alone could the Church be raised from the mire, and sent forth purged and strengthened to battle with the world. A General Council, said the promoters of the movement, expressed the mind of the whole Christian Church. In the words of the famous Constance decree, "it has its power immediately from Christ, and all of every rank, even the Papal, are bound to obey it."¹ The theory emanated from the University of Paris; it was a weapon forged by scholars and theologians in the course of their long warfare with the Papacy. Carried into effect, it would introduce a democratic element into the hitherto rigidly monarchical government of the Church, and it was hailed with enthusiasm by all the advanced spirits of the age. At the same time, statesmen welcomed it as a means of effecting the much needed reform of the Papacy. All considered the existing state of affairs a disgrace, yet all had faltered before the task of reforming a power which admitted no limitations, and acknowledged no earthly superior. Hence the Council of Constance was supported, not only by the Universities,

¹ Mansi, *Concilia*, vol. xxix. p. 21.

but also by the chief European powers. Their combined efforts achieved some measure of success. The abdication or deposition of the three rival Popes removed the most glaring scandal from the Church, while the decree *Frequens* (9 October 1417) asserted the superiority of General Councils and made provision for their recurrence. When, however, the Council proceeded to the reform of the Church "in head and members," it was brought to a standstill by the discovery that Christendom no longer possessed a common mind. The Universities were zealous for reform, but the nations of Europe, although unanimous on the necessity of ending the schism, were, on all other subjects, either indifferent or torn by conflicting interests. "The Council of Constance," says Creighton, "failed because it represented Christendom too faithfully, even to its national dissensions."

In 1423, the year in which Æneas came to the University, the first Council summoned in accordance with the Constance decree met at Siena. But the scant support which it received and the quarrels among its members gave Pope Martin v an excuse for dissolving the assembly in March 1424, before anything had been accomplished. He consented without misgiving to the summons of a fresh Council, to be held at Basel in seven years' time, strong in the knowledge that the control of the situation lay in the hands of the restored Papacy.

The Council of Basel would, in all probability, have been as ineffective as its predecessor but for the genius and enthusiasm of one man. Cardinal Giuliano Cesarini came to Basel in September 1431 to take up the office of president. Less than a month before, he had been present at the disastrous battle of Tauss, and had witnessed the rout of the crusading army by the warrior heretics of Bohemia. Convinced that the war against the Hussites could not be waged with the sword, he fixed his hopes upon the Council of Basel as the means whereby rebel Bohemia could be brought within the fold of the Church. Gifts of

mind and heart combined in Cesarini to render him well-nigh the ideal leader of a great assembly. His was not merely the learning of the scholar but the culture of the humanist. Possessed of great personal beauty, eloquent, lovable, passionately in earnest, he drew men by the unconscious attraction of his personality no less than he moved them by his words. With all his deep conviction, he was ever a peacemaker. Tact and sympathy enabled him to use his unparalleled influence in promoting good understanding between opponents. His belief in the conciliar movement was coupled with unswerving loyalty to the Papacy, and his dearest ambition was to effect a reconciliation between Eugenius IV and the Fathers at Basel.

When Cesarini came to Basel the Council was composed of three bishops, seven abbots and a few doctors, and the first semblance of activity which he contrived to produce in this meagre assembly was met by the Pope's Bull of dissolution. Undaunted by this unpromising beginning, he addressed a dignified protest to the Pope, imploring him, if he cared aught for the welfare of the Church, to reconsider his action. Having thus satisfied his honour as a servant of the Papacy, he turned to the affairs of the Council, and threw himself into the work of organisation. Very soon the effect of his presence made itself felt. The Hussites accepted his invitation to a Conference, and the Emperor Sigismund showed himself ready to champion the cause of an assembly which promised a solution of his difficulties as King of Bohemia. The King of France professed his determination "to live and die with the Council," while fresh arrivals added daily to the numbers of the Fathers. In November 1432, Æneas Silvius wrote of the number of ecclesiastics present as "great and noble," including "a vast quantity of bishops and abbots from all parts of Christendom." The Council was fully organised; its officers were chosen. The whole assembly, in fact, was established upon a firm basis, and there was

"no fear of the Pope."¹ Early in the following year the Council achieved its greatest triumph in the conference with the Hussite leaders which took place under its auspices. Cesarini, while surrendering nothing of the orthodox position, contrived to make the Hussites feel that their point of view was respected. Under the influence of his large-minded charity both parties showed creditable forbearance and a real desire for union. The conference broke up amid mutual professions of goodwill, and the deliberations at Basel formed the basis of the celebrated Compacts,² which, by conceding the right of communicating under both kinds as a special privilege to Bohemia, rendered it possible for all moderate Hussites to live at peace with the Catholic Church. The compromise proved but a temporary truce. From the first both parties made it their object to set at naught its conditions, and some thirty years later it fell to the lot of Pius II to annul the Compacts, which were no longer a basis of union but a source of perpetual strife. Nevertheless, Cesarini and his supporters had made a real advance in the direction of unity. A loyal acceptance of the Compacts on both sides would have gone far to solve the religious problems of Bohemia, while the friendly disputants at Basel had set an example of tolerance and mutual understanding altogether in advance of the age.

Æneas's connection with the Council of Basel began in the early days of Cesarini's ascendancy. From the time of his arrival in Capranica's train he made a practice of sending reports of the Council's doings to the Republic of Siena,³ and the references to Cesarini contained in these letters show how entirely the impressionable young secretary succumbed to the dominating influence at Basel. When the envoys of the University of Paris spoke vehemently against Eugenius IV, urging that "he should forthwith

¹ Æneas Silvius to the Republic of Siena, Basel, 1 Nov. 1432 (Wolkan, Ep. 8).

² The Compacts were signed at Iglau, 5 July 1436.

³ Cf. Wolkan, Epp. 8-15, 17, 18, 20-23 (from MSS. in the Vatican Archives and elsewhere).

be proceeded against, pronounced contumacious and deprived of obedience," it was Cesarini, Æneas tells us, "the wisest man of our age," who poured oil on the troubled waters, and caused more moderate counsels to prevail.¹ "The Cardinal of S. Angelo," runs another report, "possesses the highest authority with the Council."² The authority which he exercised over Æneas sufficed to make our hero an eager champion of the conciliar movement. He rejoices over the triumphs of the Council, trembles before its dangers, and is ready to identify its cause with that of Church itself. "The bark of S. Peter," he writes at a critical moment in the Council's career, "can never be submerged, however tempestuous are the waves which encompass it, as Giotto has shown in his painting at S. Peter's in Rome."³ For all his personal sympathies, Æneas's position at Basel was that of a mere soldier of fortune. His pen was at the service of the highest bidder, be he friend or opponent of the Council, and his primary concern was the pursuit of his own career. In the interests of his career he entered the service of Albergata, an uncompromising adherent of the Papacy, and in 1436 the same interests prompted his return to Basel. Private convictions were a luxury of the great, and were entirely out of place in a struggling secretary. The most that can be said is that he was undoubtedly glad when the exigencies of fortune once more bade him throw in his lot with the Council.

In 1436 the Council of Basel was, to all outward appearances, at the height of its power. It had won for itself the support of Europe, and in the face of this general consensus of opinion the Pope had been forced to yield. In January 1434 envoys from Rome arrived in Basel to announce that

¹ Æneas Silvius to the Republic of Siena, Basel, 18 Dec. 1432 (Wolkan, Ep. 10).

² Æneas Silvius to the Republic of Siena, Milan, 1 July 1434 (Wolkan, Ep. 15).

³ Æneas Silvius to the Republic of Siena, Milan, 17 Nov. 1433 (Wolkan, Ep. 14). This refers to Giotto's celebrated mosaic of the Navicella in the portico of S. Peter's.

the Bull of dissolution was revoked, and that the Pope had declared his adhesion to the Council. It was a signal triumph for Cesarini, and seemed to open the path to far-reaching schemes for the reform of the Church. Yet, once more, the history of Constance repeated itself, and the handling of the delicate question of reform proved fatal to the Council's future career. Weaknesses became apparent which had hitherto been concealed, unity was marred by the strife of factions. The division lay between Cesarini and other disinterested promoters of reform on the one hand, and, opposed to them, the clamorous party whose conception of reform was limited to attacks upon the Papal power. Head and chief of the extremists was Louis d'Allemand, Cardinal of Arles. A man of high character and sound learning, he strove for the cause which he had at heart with a freedom from considerations of self-interest as complete as that of Cesarini. At the same time he was a born fighter, consumed with bitter hatred of Eugenius IV, and, in all questions pertaining to the Council, as eager for warfare as was Cesarini for peace. He was followed by the bulk of the French clergy and by the University representatives, all moved by unreasoning hostility to the Papacy. "With regard to the reform of the Church," wrote our hero of d'Allemand and his supporters, "they held it well done and wholly reformed if the Pope left freedom to the Chapters, if he made no reservations, if he received no annates, if he gave Apostolic letters without fee, and if he commended to no churches. . . . Reform only seemed to them holy if it stripped the Apostolic See."¹

The rise to power of this extreme party is marked by the decree abolishing annates which issued from the Council in June 1435. Quite apart from the general principle involved, annates, under the existing system, formed the Pope's chief source of income, and to cut them

¹ Æneas Silvius, *De Rebus Basiliæ Gestis Commentarius*, p. 61 (Fea, *Pius II a calumniis vindicatus*).

off at one blow, without attempting to provide a substitute, was the action of wilful opponents rather than of earnest and prudent reformers. Eugenius IV at once gained an excuse for his attitude towards the Council, and public opinion, which he had alienated by his own violence, began to veer towards the Papacy, in disgust at the absence of moderation displayed by the anti-Papal party. For Cesarini, too, the decree against annates marked the parting of the ways. Till then his influence had sufficed to restrain the more vehement opponents of the Papacy, but now for the first time he had to bow before defeat. "Quarrels broke out again," writes Æneas, "and the division arose not so much between Pope and Council as between the Fathers of the Council themselves."¹ Cesarini's place in the assembly was no longer that of arbiter; he became little more than leader of the minority.

When Æneas took up his life at Basel in the spring of 1436, the burning question of the hour arose out of the choice of a city in which the approaching conference with the Eastern Church should be held. It was, on the face of it, a small matter, but it formed the occasion of the last great struggle between moderates and extremists, between the party of Cesarini and the party of d'Allemand. It was the rock upon which the Council foundered. The long-sought union of the Western and Eastern Churches seemed to Cesarini a task worthy of the Council of his dreams, and as early as 1434 negotiations were opened with the Greeks. The representatives of the Eastern Church expressed their entire readiness for a conference, but they stipulated that it should not take place at Basel, although they were willing to come to any Italian city, and, failing this, to a town in Savoy. They further required that the expenses of their journey should be paid, and thus the question of the seat of the conference turned largely on what city would guarantee the loan which the Council must needs raise for the purpose. In a report written soon

¹ Æneas Silvius, *De Rebus*, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

after his return to Basel, Æneas informs the Republic of Siena that "the Pope and all the Italians are in favour of an Italian city, but all the rest—enemies of the Latin name—refuse to come to Italy. I do not know whether it will be possible to transfer the Council to Italy, but I hope that our prudence and perseverance may triumph, and that Italy may eventually have the Council."¹ Æneas's own ambition at this juncture was to secure the coveted boon for his native Siena. "It will be a fine affair," he wrote, "and a sight worthy to be seen, and it will bring much advantage and honour to the city in which the Council is held. Would that you, O Siennese, might enjoy so great a benefit."² In his opinion, Siena had many chances in her favour. The Duke of Milan, Florence, and Venice had alone promised the requisite loan, and the enmity between these great Italian powers would make any one of the three assent to the choice of Siena rather than see the Council pass beneath the control of a rival. Siena had already been the seat of a Council, she had the favour of the Germans owing to her recent reception of the Emperor Sigismund, and Cesarini gave his support to the scheme. All that remained was for Siena to be generous in her offers of a loan. "I beg you," he pleads, "to ponder this matter with a calm mind, to consider the advantage and honour of your country, and to trust Æneas, who speaks out of love."³ Siena, however, remained deaf to her son's entreaties. In lieu of the 70,000 ducats asked for, she persistently declined to offer more than 30,000, and Æneas could only mourn the short-sightedness which spurned his advice.

Meanwhile, our hero found consolation for his disappointment in the opportunity which arose for him to make his first public oration. The envoy appointed by the Duke of

¹ Æneas Silvius to the Republic of Siena, Basel, 9 April 1436 (Wolkan, Ep. 20).

² Æneas Silvius to the Republic of Siena, Basel, 6 August 1436 (Wolkan, Ep. 21).

³ *Loc. cit.* Cf. also Ep. 22 (25 Oct. 1436) and Ep. 23 (11 Dec. 1436).

Milan to urge upon the Council the choice of Pavia proved quite incapable of making a speech, and Cesarini, liking the clever young secretary who regarded him with such admiring eyes, willingly allowed Æneas to step into the breach. He sat up all night writing his oration, and held forth the next day, for two hours, to an attentive and admiring audience.¹ As regards the substance of the oration, it is chiefly remarkable for the zeal with which Æneas set himself to gratify every shade of opinion in turn ; but the careful attention to style at once proclaims the author as a disciple of humanism, and the rounded periods of his rhetoric came as a pleasant change from the less polished utterances to which the Fathers were wont to listen.²

When Cesarini encouraged Æneas in his ambitions for Siena he had done so because the city stood more or less on neutral ground. It was in Italy, yet it was not, as Venice or Florence, definitely Papal in sympathy. The same might be said of Pavia, with this difference—that the Duke of Milan was a mighty Prince, feared alike by his friends at Basel and his enemies of the Papal party, and that all hesitated to place the future Council under his influence. Hence the ultimate decision of the Fathers was not affected by Æneas's eloquence. On 5 December a majority of two-thirds voted for the transference of the Council to Avignon. In vain Cesarini protested that Avignon was not among the places mentioned by the Greeks. The city had made satisfactory replies to the demand for a loan, and the French party seized the excuse for keeping the Council out of Italy.

Æneas's oration had failed to help his cause, but at least it furthered his own advancement ; the Archbishop of Milan acknowledged his services by bestowing on him a provostship in the Church of S. Lorenzo in Milan. Unfortunately, the Chapter of S. Lorenzo had already made

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 6.

² Mansi, *Pius II Orationes*, vol. i. p. 5.

another choice, and the Milanese raised a vehement protest in the Council against having a stranger and a layman foisted upon them, in defiance of the recent decree insisting on free capitular election.¹ Æneas's speech in his own defence was a masterpiece of specious argument. "The decree concerning elections," he urged, "binds inferiors but not the Council itself; moreover, freedom of election should be allowed to Chapters with many and weighty members, not when, as in the Church of S. Lorenzo, there are only two or three canons, unlearned and unimportant, who, if they had the power of election, would not choose anyone unless they were commanded to do so. You, Fathers, will act as you think right. I ask nothing that is against your honour, but if you decide to provide for me, I shall prefer this sign of your favour without possession of the provostship, to possession by capitular election."² Who could withstand such graceful flattery? Fortified by the Council's consent, Æneas set out for Milan, and, with the aid of the Duke, he was able to oust the Chapter's candidate. "But having obtained the provostship, he was laid upon the bed of sickness, being seized by a terrible fever."³ He was still ill when, after seventy-five days, he started on his return journey; but the ride over the Alps in the bright spring weather did what doctors had failed to accomplish. Æneas arrived at Basel completely restored to health, in time to preach before the Council on S. Ambrose's Day (4 April 1437), and to sound the praises of Milan's patron saint to the envy of theologians and the admiration of his hearers.

During Æneas's absence from Basel the controversy over the future seat of the Council had raged without intermission. Affairs were now rapidly approaching a crisis, and the unedifying quarrels and vain attempts at reconciliation which marked the final stages of the struggle have been immortalised in a letter which Æneas wrote

¹ 22 March 1436. Cf. Mansi, *Concilia*, xxix. p. 120.

² *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 7.

³ *Loc. cit.*

to Piero da Noceto.¹ Early in the year a compromise was made to the effect that, if Avignon had not produced the promised loan by 12 April, "the Holy Council could and was bound to make choice of another place." Yet when the appointed day was past, and the Council proceeded to a fresh election, the French once more gave their vote for Avignon. Their opponents promptly declared the decree of the majority to be illegal, and withdrew to record their vote in favour of Florence or Udine. In vivid words, Æneas describes the scenes which ensued. The vociferations of contending prelates grew noisier than those of drunkards in a wine-tavern, and the Fathers, who came together in order to give peace to Christendom, were only restrained from bloodshed by the intervention of the magistrates of Basel. When Cesarini arose to speak, he who, as Cicero and Demosthenes of old, had ruled the assembly by his eloquence, could not even gain a hearing for his counsels of peace and moderation. "Such is the instability of all things human, and vain is the favour of the multitude." The climax came on Tuesday, 7 May—a day on which all the influences of the stars combined to produce discord²—when the rival decrees were published simultaneously in different parts of the Cathedral. The bishops, as they donned their vestments and mitres, reminded Æneas of armies preparing for battle, and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, "whose sole delight is in concord," seemed to him almost blasphemous. Some laughed at the discordant sounds of the rival *Te Deums* which followed the reading of the decrees, but they fell on our hero's ears as the swan-song of the conciliar move-

¹ Æneas Silvius to Piero da Noceto, 21 May 1437 (Wolkan, Ep. 24; also in Mansi, *Concilia*, xxxi. p. 220).

² Jupiter, Æneas tells us, was in the tail of the Scorpion, as it had been on the outbreak of the Great Schism and at the Mohammedan Hegira. The day of the week was that dedicated to Mars, the god of war, and the fact that amid these stormy influences a schism in the Church was temporarily averted must be ascribed to the Blessed Virgin, "who would not suffer the seamless robe of her Son to be rent in the month dedicated to her name" (Æneas Silvius to Noceto, *loc. cit.*).

ment. "Verily," he exclaims, "when wise men take to folly they surpass all fools, even as the finest wine turns to the sourest vinegar."

The schism of May 7 did, in truth, mark the beginning of the end. From that time forward events followed one another in quick succession, each adding its span to the chasm which yawned between the rival parties at Basel. Before the end of the month, Eugenius IV took his stand upon the decree of the minority, and fixed Florence or Udine as the seat of the conference. In July, the dominant party in the Council drew up its indictment against the Pope, and summoned him to Basel to answer the charges brought against him. In September, Eugenius answered the challenge by a Bull of dissolution. Thus, for the second time in its history, the Council of Basel was deprived of the sanction of the head of Christendom, and Cesarini's hopes of unity between Pope and Council received their death-blow. For a few months the gallant Cardinal lingered on, striving to promote peace, but he could not stifle the growing conviction that the time had come for a loyal son of the Church to turn his back upon Basel. On 20 December he addressed the Council for the last time. He spoke with grief of the war of letters and pamphlets which waged between the rival factions, and deplored the time spent in mutual recrimination. With all his old eloquence he besought the Fathers to consider what they were doing, and to pause before they plunged the Church into the ills of a fresh schism. But the shame of the past months had shattered his enthusiastic idealism; God alone knew, he declared, whether the cause for which he had laboured were true or false. Early in January 1438 he rode out of Basel,¹ and passed for the time being out of the life of Æneas Silvius. Yet his influence over our hero was more than transitory, and Æneas never ceased to think and write of him in the language of hero-worship. The two had

¹ Creighton (ii. 319) says 9 Jan., but cf. Æneas's letter of 11 Jan. "abibit ut fertur hodie aut penitus cras" (Wolkan, Ep. 26).

much in common. Not only were Cesarini's gifts and virtues those which made a special appeal to Æneas, but his career was just such a one as Æneas might hope to imitate. Born of a poor but noble family, Cesarini had found himself in the pursuit of the gleaming banner of humanism, and by means of eloquence and learning he had risen to the foremost rank in the Church. Why, asked Æneas, as he watched Cesarini at Basel, why should not I do what he has done? These ambitions were realised in the future. The career of Pius II bears much resemblance to that of Cardinal Cesarini, and when at the last he gave his life for the crusading cause, he was still following in the path of his hero. On 10 November 1444, Cesarini died fighting against the Turk upon the fatal field of Varna. "There is a report," wrote Æneas, when he sent the news of the defeat to Italy, "that Giuliano, Cardinal of S. Angelo, the wisest and most eloquent man of our age, fell in this battle, and that his most noble spirit, so divinely fitted for every good work, has breathed its last. . . . Some say that he has escaped, . . . which is my earnest hope; but his death seems to me more probable because he was never fortunate in war. . . . Whatever his fate has been, I believe that all is well with him, who fought for the Christian faith; and if, as they say, he has died for Christ, he has without doubt passed to Him." ¹

When Cesarini left Basel, he offered horses and money for the journey to all who were willing to accompany him.² If Æneas had been guided by conviction alone, he would undoubtedly have accepted the offer. Although no advocate of Eugenius, he had little in common with the Cardinal of Arles and his supporters. His letters since his return to Basel were written from the point of view of an impartial observer, seeing light and darkness on both sides, and using

¹ Æneas Silvius to the Duke of Milan, Neustadt, 13 Dec. 1444 (Wolkan, Ep. 167; *Opera*, Ep. 52, and elsewhere).

² Æneas Silvius, Basel, 11 Jan. 1438 (Wolkan, Ep. 26, from *Archivio di Stato*, Siena).

such influence as he possessed to uphold Cesarini in his advocacy of a *via media*. "On this side," he wrote of the French party, "there are many more prelates, but where there is more honesty is another question. The (Papal) legates have the majority of theologians, but I do not think that they have more faith. . . . If you ask my opinion, I believe that there are very few on either side who are moved solely by considerations of justice."¹ Æneas's belief in the conciliar movement had in fact suffered disillusionment. He was disgusted at the self-seeking and enmity which he saw on every side, and his better self would have been glad to depart. But, meanwhile, the struggling adventurer had at last established a sure footing in Basel. He had begun to acquire reputation as a speaker and a diplomatist. Layman that he was, he had been made a member of the Council. He held his provostship under the patronage of the Duke of Milan, a personal enemy of the Pope. The Bull of deposition, moreover, had led to a considerable exodus from Basel, and the moment when offices were left vacant for new blood was not that which a rising politician would choose for quitting the scene of the Council. To leave Basel with Cesarini, it seemed, would have been to sacrifice his career. Æneas preferred to throw himself into the championship of a cause in which he only half believed, until his scruples were drowned in the flood of his own eloquence.

Æneas was now a person of some note in the Council, and during the next two years he rose rapidly. He was made head of the secretarial department, and later became Abbreviator Major, in which capacity he drafted the less important letters and documents issued in the name of the Fathers. He was sent on various embassies, and often presided over the Deputation of Faith to which he belonged.²

¹ Æneas Silvius to Piero da Noceto (Wolkan, Ep. 24).

² The Council of Basel was organised for business into four Deputations: Faith, Reformation, Peace, General Purposes. Each elected its

He even sat on the Committee of Twelve, "which office was of great weight, for the Deputations could discuss nothing that had not been laid before them by the Twelve, nor could anyone be admitted to the Council without their sanction."¹ In the summer of 1439, his labours were interrupted by a terrible outbreak of pestilence.² Hardly a house in Basel escaped the ravages of the disease, and between Easter and Martinmas some 5000 deaths were recorded. "The youth of the city," writes Æneas, "fell like leaves of the forest before the first frost of autumn." Nor was the Council spared. In the Patriarch of Aquileia, and the learned jurist Lodovico Pontano, it lost two of its most prominent supporters, while there were numerous gaps in the lower ranks of the assembly. As the terror increased many were in favour of leaving Basel, at least for a time; but the Cardinal of Arles, fearing that if the Council were once prorogued it would never reassemble, remained valiantly at his post, and his example sufficed to keep a nucleus of the Fathers together. It was a strange, gloomy summer for all who remained in the pestilence-stricken city. Many people shut themselves up in their houses and shunned all intercourse with their fellows, while those who were obliged to venture into the streets went about holding their breath, lest they should catch the fumes of the disease. At every corner they met a funeral, or a priest hurrying with the Blessed Sacrament to the dying. So rapid was the course of the disease that it was possible to see a man alive and well, and to hear ten hours later that he was buried. Æneas himself was among the victims; his friends despaired of his life, and even caused him to receive extreme unction. He escaped from the very jaws of death through the good

own President every month. The Committee of Twelve was also elected monthly. Cf. Mansi, *Concilia*, xxix. p. 377, and *John of Segovia*, cap. xxi., xxii.

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 6. Cf. Mansi, xxix. p. 377.

² For Æneas's account of the plague cf. *Commentariorum Aeneae Sylvii de Gestis Basiliensis Concilii* (*Opera*, pp. 46-7) and *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 7.

offices of a pious German doctor, whom, according to his own account, he preferred to a clever but unbelieving Frenchman. "Wonderful was the faith and goodness of the man, and almost unheard of in a doctor"—the good German actually refused to take the six gold ducats which Æneas offered him by way of payment, and, when they were pressed upon him, he would only accept them on the understanding that he should cure six poor people for nothing. Æneas's joy at his own recovery was mingled with sorrow at the loss of a dear friend, one Jean Pinan, the secretary of the Cardinal of Arles. On hearing the sad news, "the half of his soul seemed to have been taken from him, and he no longer had any enthusiasm for the affairs of the Council, nor any energy for the pursuit of learning." "Alas," he exclaims, "for the uncertainty of earthly things! alas, for the vain promises of the world! Æneas, who in his own person could not die, died in that of his friend." The plague was a cause of material loss to Æneas, for it cost him his provostship of S. Lorenzo. Filippo Maria Visconti was already wavering in his allegiance to the Council, and he took advantage of the rumours of Æneas's death to bestow the provostship upon another. In vain our hero addressed letters of complaint to his friend the Archbishop of Milan. The Duke had no further need for his services in Basel, and the some-time provost was obliged to console himself with a canonry at Trent assigned to him by the Council. Even here he encountered some opposition, and he did not enjoy the income of the canonry until he had gone in person to Trent and ousted "a certain German, a quarrelsome and crafty man who had intruded himself by means of the Chapter."¹ Such were the words which a champion of the conciliar movement permitted himself to use of the much vaunted freedom of capitular election.

Meanwhile the Council pursued its course. By a decree of 25 June 1439, Eugenius IV was deposed from his office,

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 8.

and as soon as the cessation of the pestilence enabled the sessions to be resumed, the Fathers proceeded to the business of electing an anti-Pope. On 29 October, Æneas wrote to the Archbishop of Milan enclosing a list of the thirty-three electors who were to enter the Conclave on the morrow.¹ He himself had been advised to take orders so as to qualify for the office of elector, but he contented himself with acting as a clerk of the Conclave and master of the ceremonies. In this capacity he had full opportunity of observing the proceedings, which followed closely the Roman ritual. He also took note of such incidental details as the disappointment of those who had made all preparations for entering the Conclave only to find that they had not been chosen as electors, or the anxiety which others displayed about their food, which was passed into the Conclave through a window under his own inspection. These and other living touches find their way, with perhaps more truthfulness than decorum, into his *Commentaries on the Council*.

The leaders of the Council had not acted without forethought, and before the Conclave began it was already tolerably certain upon whom the choice of the electors would fall. On 6 November, Æneas announced in the time-honoured phrase that "we have a Pope . . . the most illustrious Duke of Savoy." "He has dominions," he added, "on both sides of the Alps. All Italy will tremble, and there will not be a safe corner left for Gabriel."² A few weeks later our hero was once more at Ripaille, being a member of the deputation sent to announce the news of the election to the royal hermit, and to prepare the way for his assumption of his new dignities.

The coronation of Felix v, as Amadeus decided to call himself, took place at Basel on 24 July 1440, and again

¹ Æneas Silvius to Francesco Pizzolpasso, Archbishop of Milan, Basel, 29 Oct. 1439 (Wolkan, Ep. 31).

² Æneas Silvius to the Archbishop of Milan, 6 Nov. 1439 (Wolkan, Ep. 33; cf. also Ep. 32 to the Siennese Republic). To the champion of the Council Eugenius iv is now Gabriel Condulmier.

Æneas constituted himself the historian of the occasion. A vast platform, he tells us,¹ was erected outside the Cathedral, and here the ceremony was performed amid a splendid company of nobles and ecclesiastics. The spectators numbered some 50,000; roofs, windows, trees were all occupied, and the square itself "was so full of people that there was no space for a grain of mustard-seed." Felix amazed every one by his intimate acquaintance with ecclesiastical ceremony. He did not make a single slip himself, and even corrected the mistakes of others. "No one would have thought that a man who had been immersed in worldly affairs for forty years would be able so to steep himself in the rites of the Church." He celebrated Mass with the utmost dignity, his two sons acting as servers, and many wept with joy and emotion at the sight of "the aged father celebrating while his noble sons served him, like young olive trees round about the altar." Finally the magnificent triple crown was produced, and the Cardinal of Arles reaped the reward of his labours for the Council as, amid breathless silence, he placed it upon the new Pope's head. The company then formed itself into a procession and passed through the streets of Basel, the Bishop of Strassburg bearing the Host, and the place which custom assigned to the captains of the Papal fleet being occupied by the Pope's companions at Ripaille, the six Knights of S. Maurice. Last of all came "he whom all eyes sought," Felix v, the Pope of the Council of Basel, wearing the Papal tiara, and blessing the people as he went.

One small contretemps alone marred the effect of the coronation ceremony, and Æneas would not be himself if he failed to record it. It fell to the notaries and secretaries of the Council to chant the responses to the prayers, but when the moment came "they gave forth so discordant a sound that they produced not only laughter but tears."

¹ Æneas Silvius to John of Segovia, Basel, 13 Aug. 1440 (Wolkan, Ep. 34; also in *Opera*, pp. 61-3).

For the next week these amateur choristers and their chant formed the favourite subject of gossip, and many were overcome with shame at the thought of their performance. "But I," says Æneas, "although I was among them, did not regard my ignorance of singing as a disgrace, . . . and the next day, when the same office was said at the Dominican Convent, I did not blush to chant my lay."¹

His own joy in the occasion was rendered complete by his being made one of Felix v's secretaries. At the Roman Curia a secretaryship carried with it numerous perquisites and boundless opportunities of advancement, so that for the moment Æneas felt as if his fortune were made. He threw himself with increased ardour into the cause of the Council, and the year 1440 saw the production of two important literary works, both written from the standpoint of a whole-hearted champion of the conciliar movement. The University of Cologne had lately made a pronouncement which recognised the superiority of General Councils, but did not do so in sufficiently unqualified terms to satisfy the stalwarts at Basel. In answer to this, Æneas wrote the first of his polemical essays,² the "Dialogues on the Authority of a General Council." Here the arguments in favour of the conciliar theory in general, and of the Council of Basel in particular, are set forth by means of a discussion between Nicholas of Cusa, a recent convert of the Papal party, and Stefano da Caccia, an anti-Papal secretary. Contemporaries doubtless appreciated the author's fresh and individual treatment of a well-worn theme, but the charm of the work to-day lies chiefly in the secondary series of dialogues, between Æneas himself and a cultivated Frenchman, Martin Lefranc, which are introduced at intervals in the weightier discussion. In the development of such congenial topics as the value of eloquence or the pleasures of country life, the early history of France or the

¹ Wolkan, Ep. 34.

² *Libellus Dialogorum de generalis Concilii autoritate* (Kollarius, *Analecta Monumentorum Vindobonensia*, vol. ii. pp. 691-790).

explanation of a passage in Vergil, Æneas the humanist comes to his own.

Æneas's first historical work, the *Commentaries on the Council of Basel*,¹ also partakes of the nature of a political pamphlet. The events of which it treats are confined practically to the year 1439; it is the song of the Council's triumph, a pæan of thanksgiving for the happy era which has dawned for the Church under the auspices of her new shepherd. In 1440 the author undoubtedly believed what he wrote, but disillusionment followed hard upon the heels of rejoicing. He soon found that a secretary to Felix v was in a very different position from a secretary to a Pope whom all Europe recognised. As the months slipped by, the meagre amount of business which came to the anti-Papal Curia, the constant difficulties as to finance, and the growing discontent taught him that he had made a mistake, that there was in fact no future for the Council of Basel and its adherents.

The Council of Basel had failed, as its predecessor of Constance, and for the same reason—once the extreme party gained the ascendancy its acts no longer represented the common mind of Christendom. The powers of Europe desired above all things to avoid a fresh schism. They felt that the Fathers were not acting fairly by Eugenius iv, and from 1435 onwards their interest in the Council waned. Those princes who still supported it were moved for the most part by personal hostility to Eugenius iv, or by some other purely political consideration. As to the general attitude of Europe, it is best gauged by the two great ecclesiastical measures of the year 1438, the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges, and the declaration of German neutrality. Here the two chief nations of Europe expressed their determination to take no further part in the quarrel between Pope and Council. Germany was content to stand aside until some means could be found for the restoration of unity. France took the ecclesiastical problem into

¹ *Op. cit.*, *Opera*, pp. 1-61.

her own hands, and prepared to carry out by royal authority such reforms as suited her needs. Thus, a few months after Cesarini's departure, the prospect of an effective reform of the Church, emanating from the Council of Basel, had ceased to be within the bounds of possibility. "Among the Bishops and Fathers at Basel," said Æneas when he reviewed the situation some years later, "we saw cooks and stablemen judging the affairs of the world; who would credit their words and acts with the authority of law?"¹ In his desire to make the Council thoroughly representative, Cesarini had organised it on the broadest possible basis,² but when public opinion was alienated the democratic organisation defeated its own object. The deliberations of the "disorderly, irresponsible crowd, in which learned and unlearned were admitted on equal terms," had no weight in the eyes of Europe. They were but the manœuvres of the attacking party in a struggle with which it had no concern.

His own successes at Basel and the glamour cast over the Council by the advent of Felix v had blinded Æneas, for a time, to the true nature of the situation, and when at last it was brought home to him it was not so easy to find a way of escape. If he had no prospects in Italy in 1438, he certainly had none after 1440, when he was celebrated for the fierceness of his attacks upon the Papacy. His chief hope lay in Germany, the neutral power which both Pope and Council strove to lure to their side. During the frequent negotiations which took place between Felix v and the Germans he contrived to win the favour of some influential members of the Imperial Court. When in November 1442 the Emperor Frederick III visited Basel, he knew enough of the gifted Italian to realise that he might be a useful servant. Æneas left Basel in the

¹ *Oratio adversus Austriales* (Mansi, *Pius II Orationes*, i. p. 231).

² The lower clergy were admitted on the same footing as their superiors. Cf. Order of 26 Sept. 1432 (Pastor, *History of the Popes*, vol. i. p. 290). Æneas says (Fea, p. 46): "Lex tamen his erat, ne quenquam in dignitate constitutum nisi criminisum atque infamem repellerent."

Emperor's train, to begin life anew as a secretary in the Imperial Chancery at Vienna.

Æneas's six years' sojourn at Basel had added greatly to his experience of life. At Siena every one was ready to encourage the promising student and to praise his talents. Here he had to make his mark amid striving rivals, and to face the struggle for existence in an overcrowded market. He learned, too, to adapt himself to the cosmopolitan company in which he lived and worked. He came in contact with scholars and politicians of every shade of opinion, and from them he gathered, not only the details of European politics, but much valuable material for the study of human nature. Cesarini occupied a place apart in his esteem, but he also had a profound admiration for the intrepid Cardinal of Arles, and besides these two great leaders there were many remarkable men who had their share in the proceedings at Basel. Among them was the mystic philosopher, Nicholas of Cusa, whose work on Catholic unity was regarded as one of the chief weapons of the conciliar movement, but who, like his master Cesarini, went over to the side of the Papacy after the crisis of 1437. Æneas, as we have seen, made Cusa one of the figures in his *Dialogues*, and his connection with him did not end here. John of Segovia, the patient scholar and historian of the Council, who remained at Basel to the last; the learned Neapolitan jurist, Lodovico Pontano, whom Æneas attended on his death-bed; the Spaniard, Juan de Torquemada, most gifted and unbending of theologians; Ambrogio Traversari, the Papal envoy, a cultured disciple of humanism—these and other eminent men crossed Æneas's path at Basel. Among the lesser company of lawyers and secretaries he had many friends. Cesarini's steward, the Cardinal of Arles's secretary, a German professor and a French scholar were among his intimates, and when some of these chosen comrades met for supper the talk ranged over the whole field of politics and letters. The leading men of Europe were discussed from the point of

view of their subordinates, and their vices and virtues were laid bare before the tribunal of the rising generation.

It was a stirring life, centring round a gathering that was in itself half Parliament, half picnic, and Æneas lived it to the full. He left Basel with a growing contempt for politics, ecclesiastical and secular, and a profound belief in the brilliant future which lay before the votaries of humanism. In politics he realised, with perhaps exaggerated clearness, the importance of small things. He saw personal enmities and ambitions influencing men's attitude towards the gravest questions of the day; in everything he felt the overwhelming power of money. The prevailing atmosphere was too much both for his sensitiveness to impression and his inherent superficiality. His outlook on life grew cynical, while personal ambition became the ruling motive of his political career. Politics, in fact, was a game which he could play with the best, being provided with what seemed the one really effective weapon of the day—the new learning. At Basel the control of the situation lay with those who could give expression to their knowledge in a persuasive form. Men who, in Æneas's happy phrase, possessed "more soul than eloquence" were at a hopeless disadvantage. Side by side with his realisation of the political value of humanism went his increasing joy in letters for their own sake. As the impulse to express himself grew daily more insistent, Æneas learned that his true vocation was literary rather than political. Politics were a matter of daily bread, but his heart lay in "the idle and unrewarded pursuits of poetry, rhetoric, and history."

CHAPTER IV

THE IMPERIAL CHANCERY

ÆNEAS'S acquaintance with his Imperial master began in a manner after his own heart. In the summer of 1442 he attended the Diet of Frankfort as a member of the deputation from Basel, and here, on 27 July, he knelt before the Emperor to receive the classic laurel wreath, the reward of the poets of antiquity. The diploma which conferred this honour upon him is a masterpiece of high-sounding phraseology: "We being desirous of following the glorious example of our ancestors who were wont to crown illustrious poets on the Capitol . . . have turned the eyes of our mind upon the distinguished and renowned Æneas Silvius Piccolomini of Siena, a loyal servant of the Holy Empire and of ourselves, of whose profound learning, honourable character, and most excellent gifts of nature we have had trustworthy experience. . . . We give thanks to God Almighty that talents similar to those of the ancients are not denied to our age. . . . With our own hands we adorn our Æneas with the ever verdant laurel leaves, in order that his name and honour may never cease to flourish, and that his shining example may evoke in others like talents and learning."¹ Although Æneas said, in after years, that he had only allowed himself to be crowned in order to teach the uncultured Austrians the respect due to poetry, he was obviously entranced with the distinction. He was as vain as most

¹ Chmel, *Regesta Chronologico-Diplomatico Friderici III*, Anhang, p. xxix.

humanists, and delighted in the outward trappings of glory, while the laurel wreath made him one, not only with the poets and orators of antiquity but with Petrarch, the apostle of humanism, who had been crowned in Rome just over a hundred years before. "Do not be surprised at seeing me sign myself 'poet,' " he wrote to the Archbishop of Milan, "for thus has Cæsar willed me to be. If the Archpresbyter of Pavia and Isidoro de Rosate and all that crowd of rascals arrogate to themselves the name of jurisconsult, why should I be ashamed to assume the title of poet? It is permitted to me to share the folly of others, especially as this honour will promote greater attention to learning."¹

This promising beginning made Æneas enter upon his new duties in the most buoyant spirits. He had obtained his post, it seemed to him, on the strength of his literary reputation, and he pictured for himself a brilliant future as the Court humanist of Frederick III, a centre of light and learning among the uncultivated but admiring Germans. His chief hope of advancement lay in the Chancellor, Kaspar Schlick, a man of force and ability who had stood high in the confidence of three successive Emperors. The Chancellor's mother was Italian, and during the Emperor Sigismund's visit to Siena he had lodged with Æneas's relations, Niccolò Lolli and his family. Thus Schlick was from the first prepared to befriend the new Italian secretary, and to him Æneas's earliest efforts in humanist panegyric were addressed. In December 1442, on his return to the Court after a temporary absence, he was greeted by a poem of Æneas's composition,² and this was followed by a neatly turned essay, bristling with classical allusions, on the diversity of human tastes and ambitions.³ At the same

¹ Æneas Silvius to Francesco Pizzolpasso, 5 Dec. 1442 (Wolkan, Ep. 41; *Opera*, Ep. 29, and elsewhere). Isidoro was the Milanese envoy who had broken down in his oration at the Council of Basel. Cf. p. 57, above.

² Æneas Silvius to Kaspar Schlick, 23 Dec. 1442 (Wolkan, Ep. 42; Voigt, *Die Briefe des Aeneas Sylvius*, No. 12).

³ Wolkan, Ep. 43; *Opera*, Ep. 101, and elsewhere.



ÆNEAS SILVIUS RECEIVES THE POET'S CROWN FROM FREDERICK III

FROM THE FRESCO BY PINTORICCHIO

Piccolomini Library, Siena

time Æneas embarked upon a more serious work, a political tract known as the *Pentalogus*, which takes the form of a discussion on the politics of the day between five persons—the Emperor, the Chancellor, the Bishops of Freisingen and Chiemsee, and the author himself.¹ The moral of the *Pentalogus* is the value of humanist education as a political asset, and more especially the advantages which would accrue to Frederick III if he would consent to pursue the study of the classics under the guidance of Æneas Silvius.

Æneas's transference to Vienna also made it possible for him to renew his intercourse with various Italian friends, of whom he had heard little or nothing during the last years at Basel. The Archbishop of Milan wrote to congratulate him on having found a post in which he could do much for the welfare of both Church and State, while he promised to do his best to reinstate Æneas in his lost provostship.² Cesarini, too, wrote a warm letter, only regretting that his "dearest Æneas" was not back in Italy, and begging him not to forget "the friendship and goodwill that ever existed between us."³ Thus on all sides our hero's prospects seemed bright, and a letter to one of his many friends reflects his cheerful frame of mind: "Do not be surprised at hearing of me in these parts, for I have been called by the King's Majesty to the office of secretary; I have also been adorned with the title of poet laureate, of which name I am far from worthy; nevertheless, what the King gave could not be refused. You will find me, therefore, with this Prince, driven here by the storms which rage in the Church; I rejoice to have found a safe haven where I may live henceforth, far from the strife of prelates."

¹ Cf. *Pez. Thes. anec. nov.*, vol. iv. pt. 3, p. 736, for *Pentalogus*.

² Francesco Pizzolpasso to Æneas Silvius, 4 Feb. 1443 (Wolkan, Ep. 46; *Opera*, Ep. 180, etc.).

³ Giuliano Cesarini to Æneas Silvius, Budapest, c. Feb. 1443 (Wolkan, Ep. 45; *Opera*, Ep. 1, etc.).

⁴ Æneas Silvius to Giovanni Campisio, May 1443 (Wolkan, Ep. 55; *Opera*, Ep. 32, etc.).

There was, however, another side to the picture. In the Imperial Chancery, Æneas, at the age of thirty-seven, found himself at the bottom of the ladder. He had to start his career afresh with everything against him, conscious that he was disliked and despised by his fellow-secretaries, and that his very presence was regarded in the light of an intrusion. Few of the subordinate officials in the Chancery drew a fixed salary; they received only their board and lodging and a commission upon the documents which they drafted. Thus every addition to their number made one more to share the scanty profits, and if the intruder were a foreigner his coming was doubly resented. During the early days of his sojourn at the Imperial Court Æneas was subjected to every form of petty persecution. "He was esteemed the last of all; he had the worst bed and the worst place at table; he was hated, mocked at, and treated as an enemy."¹ He had most to endure during the Chancellor's absence, when the control of the Chancery fell to one Wilhelm Taz, "a Bavarian and an enemy of the Italian name who tormented Æneas in many subtle ways."² The burden of his lot pressed heavily upon the sensitive Italian, and the remembrance of what he himself suffered inspires the pages of his tract upon the Miseries of Courtiers, one of the most popular and widely read of his works.³ There are few more realistic pictures of the seamy side of Court-life than that set forth in *De Curialium Miseriis*. It describes the German Court from the point of view of an Italian of the middle classes, revealing at every turn both the marked superiority of Italian civilisation and also the fastidious, over-sensitive nature of the author. The slovenly, irregular meals were among Æneas's daily trials. The dirty wooden bowl handed round from mouth to mouth disgusted him as much as the poor quality of the wine which it contained. The sight of the tablecloth—soiled, sticky,

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 9.

² *Loc. cit.*

³ Æneas Silvius to Johann von Eich, 30 Nov. 1444, *De Curialium Miseriis* (Wolkan, Ep. 166; *Opera*, etc.).

and full of holes—took away what appetite he could muster for the cold, or twice-cooked, joints, the rancid butter, the cheese alive with vermin and harder than any stone, the eggs that seemed about to become chickens, and the fish or vegetables stewed in oil taken from the lamps, and smelling strong enough to slay a serpent. He resented having to eat black bread, not because it was cheaper than white, but because the Germans preferred it. He suffered in spirit at being thought troublesome because he asked for salt, or vinegar, or water when the servants had neglected to put it on the table, or at the sight of a dainty dish from the royal table being sent down to a more favoured companion. Against all this squalor he set the picture of citizen-life in Siena, where “in the pleasant company of wife and sweet children, men eat their chaste and frugal meal.” Even the peasant among his flocks at Corsignano, dining off chestnuts, milk, and ripe apples, washed down by water from the running stream, was better off than the Emperor’s wretched secretary. As for the trials of the night, they were worse than those of the day. Sometimes some ten or twenty of the minor officials shared a common sleeping-room. One man would come in drunk, another would throw his boots off, another would snore, there would never be a moment’s quiet until after midnight. Even his bed, with its damp, dirty linen, must be shared with some distasteful companion. Night and day, there was never solitude for the miserable courtier; he lived in a crowd, often idle but never at leisure. “If you have found some table where you can read or write, at once some one comes and disturbs you; and if others leave you in peace, the steward will be there making up his accounts and jingling his money. Nowhere is there a quiet corner in which you can say with Scipio, ‘I am never less lonely than when I am alone.’ ”

To the citizen of an Italian Republic the atmosphere of a Court seemed stifling and highly artificial. Flattery usurped the place of truth, free discussion was impossible; the courtier must be all things to all men, and must twist

and turn his natural disposition to suit a prince's whim. Although Æneas had the instincts of a courtier and could fawn and flatter with the best, he was at bottom independent. His soul rebelled when his tongue was most submissive, and he despised himself for his own success. "It is hard to curb ambition, to restrain avarice, to subjugate envy, to keep back anger, and to control lust when you always dwell in the midst of them." His conclusion that it is impossible for anybody to live a good life at Court is the confession of one whose surroundings have proved too strong for him, and who is letting himself be dragged below his own standards.

Dogged determination not to give in alone enabled him to live through these dreary days. "He put back his ears like the unwilling ass when it receives a heavier burden upon its back" ¹ is his own graphic description of his behaviour. Pride and ambition alike forbade him to accept defeat, so he set his teeth and prepared to await the dawning of a happier day.

Even harder to bear than the slights and discomforts of his daily existence was the knowledge that he had been mistaken as to the value which his new masters placed upon his literary gifts. Humanism, as Æneas understood it, was almost non-existent in Germany, and the truisms of Italy were still dangerous and new-fangled doctrines north of the Alps. His passionate love of literature for its own sake called forth no sympathy among a nation that regarded the study of poetry as useless, if not actually immoral. His naïve delight in all that savoured of antiquity, his diligent pursuit of the arts of style and speech, were simply not appreciated by a people who set no store by the graces and refinements of life. Judged by Italian standards, Frederick III was anything but satisfactory as a patron of learning. His tastes were those of a simple and somewhat indolent country gentleman, and literary pursuits were only one degree less wearisome to him than

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 9.

politics. While huntsman and groom, cook and butler were admitted freely to the Imperial presence, the would-be Court humanist never saw his master except in public. Frederick waded through the *Pentalogus* with considerable difficulty, and did not remind the author of his promise to dedicate other works to him in the future. As to the Chancellor, he was wholly a politician, immersed in public business, and regarding the new learning solely from the point of view of its practical value in the world of affairs.¹

From first to last the atmosphere of Germany was quite uncongenial to Æneas. Latin to his finger-tips, he hated the Teutons, their climate, their manners and their habits of mind, and contact with them seemed to bring out all that was worst in his nature. During the first years of his exile he sought relief from his misery in unrestrained vice, yet the very debaucheries which they shared together only accentuated the differences between him and his companions. The gluttony and drunkenness of the Germans disgusted him, and their sordid revels bore but faint resemblance to the flower-bedecked love-feasts of Siena. The Germans, for their part, could not understand Æneas, and the classical glamour with which he clothed his licentiousness seemed to them a mere refinement of wickedness. In his letters of this period there is a note of home-sickness, a cry of yearning for "the soft and pleasant air of Italy . . . where spring is all but perpetual and the remaining months are summer,"² and even when success had crowned his struggles Italy was still the land of his desire. "When, my Giovanni, shall I see you again," he wrote to a friend in

¹ He was, however, fully alive to the value of eloquence in the sphere of politics. Dr. Wolkan (*Die Briefe des Eneas Silvius*) cites the drafts of letters prepared by Æneas and corrected by Schlick which he has found in the Vienesé Archives, and points out that the alterations are almost invariably corrections of fact and not of style. Chmel (*Materialen*, i. 116) has a letter written by Schlick with the marginal note, "Domine Enea, appetis hoc ornatius, effectu non mutato" ("You may draft this more elegantly, but do not alter the sense").

² *Libellus Dialogorum* (Kollar, p. 703).

Rome in 1445,¹ "when shall I return to my home? . . . Here I have fixed my abode, and here I must remain. Here I must live and die, far from relations, friends, acquaintances, cut off from sweet intercourse with my friends. Would that I had never seen Basel! Then I might have died in my own country, I might have lain on the bosom of my parents. . . . If the fates had not led me to Basel, I might have obtained some honourable post in the Roman Curia, where I should be living in the midst of friends. I have great cause to hate Basel, where I spent so much time in vain. . . . It is true that I am valued here beyond my deserts and enjoy many advantages. Yet what are they without companions? But, you ask, have you no companions? Good men and true are indeed to be found here, but they are not lovers of letters, they do not delight in the things that delight me."

Æneas regarded his life in Germany as so many years spent in exile, nevertheless he rose during this period from obscurity to fame. Kaspar Schlick might not appreciate literary accomplishments, but he was keenly alive to the value of a good servant, and he soon realised that the Italian secretary was peculiarly adapted to his requirements. In the course of his wanderings Æneas had made many friends, and he took care never to lose sight of anyone who might be useful to him on some future occasion. On leaving Basel he had carefully refrained from severing his connection with the Council, and he was in active correspondence with friends there, as well as with others at the Roman Curia. A man who reckoned half the secretaries of Europe among his intimates was invaluable as a political agent. So Schlick discovered in the course of the year 1443, when his energies were directed towards establishing his brother Heinrich in the rich bishopric of Freisingen, made vacant by the death of Æneas's former master, Nicodemo della Scala. Loyalty to the principle of German neutrality

¹ Æneas Silvius to Giovanni Campisio, Sept. 1445 (Wolkan, Ep. 185; also in Voigt, Ep. 146).

took the form of entire readiness to accept favours from whichever quarter they could be obtained, and within a few days of the Bishop's death letters had been dispatched, both to Rome and to Basel, asking that the vacant see might be given to Heinrich Schlick.¹ But meanwhile the Chapter of Freisingen elected Johann Grünwalder, one of Felix v's cardinals, and the struggle turned on whether Basel or Rome could be induced to reverse the Chapter's choice. For the next nine months Æneas was active in his master's cause. He wrote to Louis d'Allemand begging him not to refuse the request. The position of the Council, he urged, would be immeasurably strengthened if the all-powerful Chancellor became its debtor.² On the other hand, Giovanni Campisio reported progress from Rome, and promised that his master, the Archbishop of Taranto, would use his influence in Schlick's favour.³ In the midst of the negotiations the Chancellor was obliged to leave the Court, on business, and to Æneas fell the whole conduct of the affair, with the additional responsibility of keeping Schlick informed of all that happened. On 11 December he wrote to advise the Chancellor's prompt return.⁴ "The King is most anxious to have you back," he declared, "and you will be able to ask for what you want with the greatest effect, and to settle the matter of the Freisingen bishopric at your will." Nothing fresh has arrived from Rome, but he is hopeful as to the Pope's intentions. From Basel he fears there is little to be obtained, "for there the will of the multitude prevails."

Æneas's surmises proved correct. While the Council confirmed the capitular election, Eugenius iv nominated Heinrich Schlick. The final stage of the struggle took

¹ Cf. Wolkan, vol. ii. epp. xxx.-xxxii. and xxxviii. (letters written by Æneas in the Chancellor's name).

² Æneas Silvius to Cardinal Louis d'Allemand, c. 23 Sept. 1443 (Wolkan, Ep. 80; *Opera*, Ep. 183, and elsewhere).

³ Giovanni Campisio, 13 Nov. 1443 (Wolkan, Ep. 95; *Opera*, Ep. 169, etc.).

⁴ Æneas Silvius to Kaspar Schlick, 11 Dec. 1443 (Wolkan, Ep. 103; Voigt, Ep. 75).

place at Neustadt, where it fell to Frederick III to decide which of the two candidates he should invest with the temporalities of the see. Grünwalder pleaded his cause before the Emperor in person, while Chancellor Schlick delivered an eloquent oration, composed for him by Æneas, in support of his brother. It was like the contest between Ajax and Ulysses,¹ Æneas told Campisio, and Ulysses (Schlick) it was who bore off the prize. Moreover, by the time that Heinrich Schlick had taken possession of his bishopric, Æneas's worst days at the Imperial Court were over. In the course of these protracted negotiations he had risen from the position of a servant to that of the Chancellor's confidential friend. He had exchanged the horrors of the common meals for a place at the Chancellor's "well appointed table." He received a fixed salary direct from his master, and did not even have to give a commission to the treasurer. During Schlick's absences it was no longer Wilhelm Taz but the despised Italian who had the management of the Chancery, and "he who had once trampled upon Æneas was now obliged to reverence him. . . . Thus all may know that humility can easily be raised up, while pride can yet more easily be cast down."²

The episode of the Freisingen bishopric was of considerable political importance. The fact that Rome had granted the favour, which Basel refused, definitely inclined Schlick and Æneas to the side of the Papacy, at a time when events were hurrying the reluctant Emperor towards some settlement of the ecclesiastical problem.

German neutrality was at best a temporary expedient, yet any attempt at a more permanent solution was complicated by the internal politics of the Empire—by the unending struggle between the two principles of unity and separatism, Imperial control and territorial independence, which make up German history at this period. Frederick III,

¹ Æneas Silvius to Campisio, 8 June 1441 (Wolkan, Ep. 148; Voigt, Ep. 115).

² *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 9.

for all his indolence, had a strong feeling that it was incumbent on him, as Emperor, to make at least an effort to end the schism. His ideas did not go beyond the time-honoured scheme for a fresh General Council, summoned by himself, which all Europe would recognise, and with this end in view Æneas was employed, during the summer of 1443, in drafting letters to the chief European rulers, inviting their co-operation in the Emperor's design. The same scheme was to be laid before the princes of the Empire when they met at the Diet of Nürnberg in August 1444. But they, meanwhile, had taken the matter into their own hands. German neutrality served the purposes of the great territorial princes remarkably well, and they had no desire to end a condition of affairs so favourable to their separatist interests. In every ecclesiastical question that arose they could play off one Pope against another, and so strengthen their own control over the Churches in their dominions. It was undoubtedly the desire to prolong the present situation which prompted a new development in ecclesiastical politics in 1443—namely, a League of Imperial Electors in favour of Felix v. European opinion, so far as it existed, was decidedly against the Council of Basel, and in rallying to the support of the anti-Pope the German princes knew well enough that they could not end the schism. Yet they might conceivably be able to readjust the balance in Felix's favour, thus strengthening their own independence, and at the same time depriving the Emperor of the prestige which would accrue to him from the restoration of unity.

Such was the situation in Germany at the opening of the Diet of Nürnberg, which the Emperor attended in person, and where Æneas figured in an official capacity as one of the four Commissioners appointed to deal with the ecclesiastical question. As might be supposed, the Diet only made plain the conflicting interests of Emperor and Electors. It was clear that a nation divided against herself could do little to restore unity to the Church. Frederick's proposals

for the summons of a fresh Council were rejected with contempt, and from henceforth each party acted separately. The Emperor embarked on independent negotiations with the rival Popes, which resulted shortly in his making his peace with Rome. The Electoral League continued to exercise a spasmodic activity, and the ecclesiastical history of the next few years turns upon the gradual undermining of its schemes by the skilful diplomacy of Æneas Silvius. An attempt is sometimes made to invest the action of the princes with the halo of patriotism, and Æneas is represented as the wily ultramontane who frustrated an honest effort to reform the German Church on national lines. If there had been any genuine national movement in Germany the reproach would be well deserved, but the success of Æneas's diplomacy came from his perception that these combinations of Electors and princes were made for selfish ends. Patriotic motives served as a pretext, but the true strength of the Electoral League lay in the territorial ambitions of its individual members.

At the time of the Diet of Nürnberg, Æneas's official attitude towards the ecclesiastical question was that which behoved a servant of the Emperor, namely, loyal adherence to the principle of neutrality. But his opinions had undergone considerable modification in the course of his sojourn at the Imperial Court, and he now only awaited the opportunity to declare himself in his true colours. The process of transformation, which turned a secretary of the anti-Pope into a Papal agent, may be traced in his correspondence during the years 1443 and 1444. In April 1443, Æneas so far held to his former opinions as to write a tract on the supreme authority of General Councils.¹ His tone is tentative throughout, and he confines his arguments to general grounds, carefully abstaining from any mention of the Council of Basel, but there is nothing in the tract to imply a radical change of position. Throughout the year

¹ Æneas Silvius to Hartung von Kappel (Wolkan, Ep. 47; also in Kollar).

he remained in close touch with his friends at Basel, writing to them almost in the capacity of an agent of the Council at the Imperial Court. He reports, for example, on the behaviour of the Council's representative, the Patriarch of Aquileia, and warns d'Allemand that he is not at all equal to his work.¹ He complains to one of his friends that, in spite of the great services which he has rendered and is still rendering to Felix v, he is neglected and forgotten. "I see your intentions and your thoughts," he writes; "because you know that I am loyal and unchanging you turn your attention to others whose faith is wavering. You provide for them lest they should go over to the enemy, but no one considers him who is faithful and will ever remain so. . . . The least you can do is to see that some benefice is given to me, who have served you so long."² This letter was written in October 1443. In April of the following year Æneas gave a sure proof that his boasted loyalty to Basel was at an end—he tried to sell his anti-Papal secretaryship.³ The cause of this sudden change must be sought in the events of the intervening months, that is, in the negotiations with regard to the Freisingen bishopric, and also in the answers which Frederick III received to his proposal for the summons of a new Council. These, it would appear, finally convinced Æneas that the weight of European opinion was on the side of Eugenius IV and that his cause must ultimately triumph. If this were so, the summons of a new Council would only increase the confusion; the surest way of ending the schism would be to work for the surrender of German neutrality and the return of the Empire to the Roman obedience.

If peace were to be restored to the Church by means of a

¹ Æneas Silvius to Louis d'Allemand, Oct. 1443 (Wolkan, Ep. 86; Voigt, Ep. 50).

² Æneas Silvius to a friend in Basel (Wolkan, Ep. 81; Voigt, Ep. 51).

³ Æneas Silvius to Giovanni Peregallo, 18 April 1444 (Wolkan, Ep. 136; *Opera*, Ep. 61, etc.): "Scriptorie officium, quod illic habeo, si emptorem reperit, pretium mihi rescribe, ut si fieri potest, utiliter illo me levem, quia non sum ejus animi, ut ad vos redeam."

reconciliation between Pope and Emperor, Æneas was obviously the right person to act as mediator. The Freisingen episode had already indicated that his true vocation was to serve as a connecting link between Germany and Italy, and the time was now fast approaching when he could use his advantages upon a larger scale. As early as November 1443, Piero da Noceto (now a secretary in the Roman Curia and married to a fair Florentine lady who was endowed with every gift save riches), wrote a pathetic appeal to his old friend to use his influence for the promotion of peace between Pope and Emperor. "Believe me, my sweetest Æneas," he wrote, "my earnings nowadays are barely enough to provide the necessities of existence; you know the ups and downs of the Curia. But if only the Church were at peace and the Holy Father had the obedience of all, I should be able to make a living out of my post."¹ At the time Æneas could only answer that he was the servant of a neutral Prince and must write and speak as his master desired.² But in May 1444 he is writing to Cesarini from the point of view of one whose chief object is to end the neutrality of Germany. "The neutrality will be difficult to abolish," he declares, "because it is useful to many. This new device is popular because no one in possession of an ecclesiastical office, whether rightfully or wrongfully, can be deprived of it, and the Bishops can bestow benefices at their pleasure. It is not easy to snatch the prey from the wolf's mouth."³ It was, indeed, no easy task upon which Æneas was about to embark. As well as the opposition of the Electoral League he had to reckon with the more insidious obstacle of the Emperor's apathy. The failure of the Diet of Nürnberg, however, made it possible to try the experiment, and the first step

¹ Piero da Noceto to Æneas Silvius, 18 Nov. 1443 (Wolkan, Ep. 97; *Opera*, Ep. 170, etc.).

² Æneas Silvius to Noceto, 16 Jan. 1444 (Wolkan, Ep. 119; *Opera*, Ep. 45, etc.).

³ Æneas Silvius to Cesarini, 28 May 1444 (Wolkan, Ep. 142; *Opera*, Ep. 65, etc.).

was taken when Frederick III agreed to send a deputation to Rome with Æneas as its principal member. The ostensible object of the embassy was to win the Pope's assent to the proposal for a new Council, but its real importance lay in the re-establishment of personal relations between the Emperor and Eugenius IV. Thus the victim of the "Basel heresy" would obtain his own forgiveness as the representative of a greater penitent. Æneas would see Italy again, and the mistakes of the past would be blotted out. "I wish you and my mother to know that I am in excellent health and in daily expectation of improvement in my fortunes," he wrote to Silvio Piccolomini in November 1444. "I pray you to have good hope, for if God continues to favour me as He has now begun to do, I may yet be an honour to you and to our family."¹

Early in the year 1445² Æneas set out on his mission, in the highest spirits. The road to Rome led him through Siena, and he was able to spend a few days with his relations, whom he had not seen for eleven years. Delighted as the Piccolomini were to see him again, they were filled with alarm at the thought of his approaching interview with Eugenius. Mindful of all that he had spoken and written at Basel, they besought him to consider the Pope's revengeful disposition and to turn back before it was too late. But Æneas knew well enough that the services which he could render to the Pope in his present position were sufficient to outweigh any temptation to vengeance, and he assured his friends that they need not fear. At the same time he could not altogether resist the pleasure of playing the martyr; whatever the risk, he told them, he had no choice but to obey the Emperor.³

His reception in Rome left nothing to be desired. Piero

¹ Æneas Silvius to his father, 19 Nov. 1444 (Wolkan, Ep. 162; Voigt, Ep. 130).

² He left Rome on his return journey 1 April 1445 (cf. Wolkan, Ep. 169).

³ Fea, p. 88.

da Noceto, Giovanni Campisio, and a host of other friends welcomed him with open arms, while two Cardinals were appointed to absolve him from the ecclesiastical censures incurred at Basel, as a prelude to his admission into the Pope's presence. Finally, at the feet of Pope Eugenius, the newly restored penitent made his *apologia*. "Holy Father, before I expound my mission from the Emperor, I will say a few words about myself. I know that much evil has come to your ears concerning me, and those who censured me spoke the truth. I do not deny all that I spoke, wrote, and did at Basel, although my mind was not set on injuring you but on the service of the Church. I erred, and no one can deny it, but my companions in error were many and famous. I followed Cardinal Cesarini, the Archbishop of Palermo, and the apostolic notary Lodovico Pontano, lights of the legal profession and teachers of the truth, not to mention the Universities and schools in all parts of the world who pronounced judgment against you. In such company who would not have erred? When I discovered the error of Basel, I confess that I did not flee to you at once. Fearful of falling from Scylla into Charybdis, I betook myself to the neutral party, in order not to go from one extreme to the other without mature deliberation. I remained with the Emperor for three years, and the disputes which I heard between your Legates and those of the Council convinced me that truth was on your side. Therefore, when the Emperor bade me present myself before your Holiness, I obeyed willingly, hoping that thus I might regain your favour. To-day I stand in your presence, and plead forgiveness because I sinned in ignorance. And now I will turn to the affairs of the Emperor." ¹

Eugenius received his penitent graciously. "We know that you erred with many," he replied, "and to those who confess their faults we cannot refuse pardon. The Church is a loving mother, who remembers the unacknowledged

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 10.

sin but forgets that which is freely confessed. Now that you hold the truth, take care never to let it go, and strive by good works to merit Divine favour. You live in a land where you may champion the truth and serve the Church. We will not remember former injuries, and from henceforth we will love you well if you walk well." ¹ It is obvious that Æneas was thoroughly enjoying himself. The dramatic character of his interview pleased his artistic instincts, and his confession was near enough to the truth for him to believe it absolutely, in the enthusiasm of the moment. He left the Pope's presence ready to make the most of the precious days in Rome, and to throw himself into the pleasant festivities which friends and patrons were preparing in his honour.

Amid the general cordiality which marked his reception he met with one rebuff. One day, at the house of Cardinal Scarampo, he chanced to see his old acquaintance Tommaso Parentucelli, once steward of Cardinal Albergata's household and now Bishop of Bologna. The relations between steward and secretary had probably been strained at times, but Æneas was never inclined to bear malice, and he advanced with outstretched hands to greet the Bishop. He, however, promptly walked in another direction, and would make no response to Æneas's advances. Thereupon our friend's pride was stung, "and he determined not to humiliate himself again before a man who scorned him. Whenever he met Tommaso afterwards, he gave him no salutation, and pretended not to see him, lest he should be insulted afresh. But his mind was ignorant of the future," adds this unblushing opportunist; "if Æneas had known that he was dealing with a future Pope, he would have suffered all things." ²

From the point of view of politics, the mission to Rome achieved its main object. Pope and Emperor were completely reconciled, and within a year of our hero's interview with Eugenius IV the alliance was cemented in docu-

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 10.

² Fea, p. 89.

mentary form. Æneas had not long been back in Germany when Cardinal Carvajal and Tommaso Parentucelli arrived at the Imperial Court as Papal envoys. Their labours throughout the summer bore fruit in the Papal Bulls of February 1446, in which Eugenius granted to his new ally considerable rights of ecclesiastical patronage in the Hapsburg dominions.¹ He also agreed to pay him 221,000 ducats, and promised various other favours in the event of Frederick III's coming to Italy to seek the Imperial Crown.² Yet the fact that the Pope had been able to buy the support of the Emperor did not by any means involve the surrender of German neutrality. Frederick himself was definitely committed to the side of Rome, but meanwhile the members of the Electoral League had roused themselves to a tardy patriotism, and were working for the summons of an "assembly of the German Church or a national Council" to deal with the ecclesiastical question as if it were still entirely open.³ To make matters worse, the Pope had practically refused to entertain the proposal for a fresh Council made to him by Æneas on the Emperor's behalf. This refusal, as Æneas himself recognised, undermined the sole basis on which Emperor and Electors could unite. "If my mission to Rome had ended differently," he wrote, shortly after his return, "it would be far easier for every one to act in unison. As it is, I see a great eagle being torn in pieces, and I fear that there will be a plentiful fall of feathers."⁴ Four months later he wrote in the same strain. "The Emperor hates the neutrality and would willingly renounce it, if the princes would agree. . . . But the Germans, as you know, are not easily brought to a

¹ The Bulls are given in Chmel, *Materialien zur österreichischen Geschichte*, i. Nos. 72-4. Cf. also Voigt, vol. i. p. 347; and Creighton, vol. iii. pp. 72-4.

² Cf. Gregorius Heimburg to the Archbishop of Gran Prag, 3 July 1466, for this information. The letter is given in Voigt, vol. i. Appendix II.

³ Cf. Creighton, vol. iii. p. 71; and Voigt, vol. i. p. 345.

⁴ Æneas Silvius to Giovanni Campisio, 21 May 1445 (Wolkan, Ep. 170; also Voigt, Ep. 138).

conclusion, and once having reached it they are still harder to move from it." ¹

As regards Æneas's personal share in the negotiations, the next important stage was reached in the spring of 1446, when the Emperor received what was practically the ultimatum of the Electors on the ecclesiastical question. In February of this year Eugenius felt himself strong enough to strike directly at his foes in Germany, and he issued a Bull of deposition against two of the ecclesiastical Electors—the Archbishops of Trier and Cologne. The cry of danger to Electoral privileges stirred the League to prompt and united action. At a meeting at Frankfort ² the six Electors professed themselves ready to recognise Eugenius if he would acknowledge the authority of General Councils, accept the reforming decrees of Basel, withdraw all censures against the upholders of German neutrality, and agree to the summons of a fresh Council to be held within the confines of the Empire. If he refused their terms, they would declare for Felix v and endeavour to end the schism in his favour. The Electors were anxious to secure the co-operation of the Emperor, and at once sent an embassy to the Imperial Court to expound their policy. Yet they made it clear that, if Frederick failed them, they were prepared to act without him, and the Emperor was aghast at the thought of the harm which might be done if Eugenius were taken by surprise and returned a fiery answer to these uncompromising proposals. The Electoral envoys had instructions to proceed straight to Rome after their interview with Frederick, so that all the latter could do was to confide the whole matter to Æneas, and send him post-haste to Italy to give Eugenius a word of warning. Parentucelli, the Papal Legate, was also advised to return to Rome immediately, and these two somewhat ill-assorted travelling companions set out

¹ Æneas Silvius to Giovanni Campisio, Sept. 1445 (Wolkan, Ep. 185; also Voigt, Ep. 146).

² Cf. Voigt, vol. i. p. 359; and Creighton, vol. iii. p. 75.

together.¹ In the mountains of Carinthia they found the streams swollen by the winter snows, and their road barred by broken bridges. Some native guides conducted them by another route, which added three days more to their journey, and as the Electoral envoys had the advantage of a four days' start in the race for Rome, Æneas and Parentucelli were in terror lest they should arrive too late. On reaching Rome they learned to their joy that their rivals had arrived the night before, and had not yet been received in audience by the Pope. Primed by Æneas, Parentucelli hastened to the Papal presence, and so explained the situation that when the time came for Eugenius to receive the Germans, he replied to their somewhat bellicose speeches "with few and dignified words."²

The situation was saved for the time being, and Æneas had secured a diplomatic victory. He gave expression to his triumph in depicting the discomfiture of the Germans, who were kept waiting in Rome for three weeks, during the hot summer weather, before they received a final answer from the Pope. Their principal spokesman was one Gregorius Heimburg, an able lawyer and a keen patriot, destined both by character and opinions to be the lifelong rival of Æneas Silvius. "In the evening," writes his malicious opponent, "Gregorius might be seen pacing on Monte Giordano, gesticulating wildly, sweltering with heat, head and chest bare, his cloak on the ground. He seemed to have no respect for the Romans or for his office, and did not hesitate to curse Rome, Eugenius, and the Curia, while he called down many imprecations on the heat."³ Nowhere is the conflict between the two races—Latin and

¹ They had made up their quarrel before Æneas left Rome (cf. *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 10), but their relations were never cordial.

² Æneas Silvius, *Hist. Frid. III* (Kollar, p. 123). Cf. also *Commentarii*, p. 11; and Fea, p. 91. Frederick III could not betray the plans of the Electors to the Papal Legate, but Æneas admits that Parentucelli "guessed and opined much."

³ *Hist. Frid. III* (Kollar, p. 124).

Teutonic—more strikingly illustrated than in the encounters between Æneas and this sturdy champion of German nationality. “Gregorius was handsome, tall and cheerful in appearance, with bright eyes and a bald head. But his speech and his gestures lacked restraint, he deferred to none in his judgment, and was peculiar in his habits, preferring liberty in all things; he was uncultivated and was not ashamed of his ignorance.”¹ The description is a finished sketch of Heimburg’s character, and it expresses an Italian’s contempt for one who was conspicuously lacking in all that he understood by the word *civiltà*. What chances had this blundering individualist against the quick wits and eminently social qualities of Æneas?

In the end Gregorius and his companions left Rome with the promise that Eugenius would send his answer to the Diet which was about to meet at Frankfort. Meanwhile, Æneas was received in private audience by the Pope and treated with marked favour. He then set out with Parentucelli on the return journey, with hardly more time to spare than on the way to Rome, if they were to reach Frankfort for the opening of the Diet on 1 September. When the travellers arrived at Parma, after crossing the Apennines on foot and spending a sleepless night in a peasant’s hut, Parentucelli fell ill with fever, and Æneas was obliged to leave him behind while he hastened on with the Papal letters. He travelled by way of the Brenner and contrived to enjoy a day’s hunting with Sigismund of Tyrol before he joined Chancellor Schlick, and entered Frankfort in his company as the Diet was assembling.²

The Diet of Frankfort is chiefly remarkable for a discreditable, although highly successful, episode in Æneas’s diplomatic career. At the opening of the proceedings matters seemed to be at a dead-lock. On the one side was Eugenius’s answer to the Electors, which, as every one

¹ *Hist. Frid. III* (Kollar, p. 123).

² *Commentarii*, lib. i. pp. 11-2; and Fea, p. 94.

realised, made no real concessions; and the chief representative of the Papacy was the scrupulous and uncompromising Cardinal Carvajal, who "always promised less than he intended to perform and wanted more than could be obtained."¹ On the other side were the princes, goaded to exasperation by Heimbürg's account of his experiences in Rome, and ready to declare for Felix v at the first opportunity. Out of these irreconcilable elements the ingenuity of Æneas contrived to fashion a compromise. The Diet, which began so badly, sealed the fate of German neutrality, and secured the final victory of Rome. Æneas's first move was to break up the Electoral League, by the simple expedient of bribing the Archbishop of Mainz to accept the Pope's answer as the basis of a peaceful settlement. "At length," he writes, "it was necessary to have recourse to gold, to which ears are seldom deaf. Gold is the master of Courts, it rules all things, and it conquered the Archbishop."² The traditional friendship between the houses of Hohenzollern and Hapsburg made it comparatively easy to secure the Elector of Brandenburg, and with two Electors won over, it was only necessary to provide them with some excuse for their change of front. Taking the ultimatum of the Electors, Æneas sat up all one night and "squeezed out the poison which Eugenius abhorred, so extending the meaning that provision was made for the needs of the nation and for the restoration of the Archbishops."³ The true cleverness of this "noble deed," as its author calls it, lay in the way in which Æneas contrived to use his double rôle of Imperial secretary and Papal agent to give authority to his handiwork. The Papal Legates regarded him as the spokesman of the Empire, offering terms which Eugenius would be free to modify, while the Electors gained the impression that the new edition of their ultimatum rested upon the authority

¹ Fea, p. 99. Cf. also *Hist. Frid.* III, p. 128.

² *Hist. Frid.* III, p. 127.

³ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 12. Cf. also *Hist. Frid.* III, p. 128.

of the Pope. Great was the surprise and anger of the envoys from Basel on learning that the compromise was accepted by all parties in the Diet, and that if Eugenius sanctioned the new terms, he would receive the obedience of Germany. "Why should this Sienese fellow come from Tuscany to give laws to the Germans?" asked John of Lysura. "It is better to have good laws from strangers than bad laws from natives," was Æneas's prompt reply.¹

All that remained to be done was to submit the conclusions of the Diet of Frankfort to the Pope, and in November 1446 Æneas started for Rome, for the third time within two years. He was now no longer the secret agent, but the Imperial representative, first among the crowd of envoys from Electors and princes sent to Rome on this momentous occasion. The whole embassy numbered some sixty horsemen, and they entered Rome in state, escorted by the officials of the Curia, who had come out to meet them.² On 12 January 1447, Eugenius received the Germans in a secret Consistory, and Æneas expounded to him the Frankfort articles. From a letter of the Abbot of San Galgano to the Republic of Siena we learn that "Messer Enea Piccolomini, poet and orator," won much praise for the able and eloquent manner in which he brought forward proposals which were "in themselves hateful and displeasing."³ In spite of Æneas's manipulation, the terms of reconciliation were by no means acceptable to the Papacy. Carvajal, Parentucelli, and others who knew something of the situation in Germany, did their utmost in the cause of peace, but extremists such as Torquemada were opposed to any concession, and the question was hotly debated in Rome. The Abbot of San Galgano probably expresses the general opinion when he writes: "They (the Germans)

¹ Fea, p. 103. Cf. *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 12, where Æneas states that he made no reply for fear of increasing Lysura's anger.

² Cf. Æneas Silvius to Frederick III (Muratori, *Rev. Ital. Script.*, vol. iii. pt. 2, pp. 878-98).

³ Pastor, *History of the Popes*, vol. i. p. 403.

demand in brief four things, each more exorbitant than the others, and hateful both to the Holy Father and to the Cardinals. Nevertheless, owing to the evil times, it will be necessary to concede them in substance, in order to avoid the greater dangers and scandals which would arise if they were refused.”¹

This same spirit of grudging acquiescence inspires the Bulls which finally issued from the Papal Chancery.² The Electors demanded the summons of a fresh Council at a fixed date and place; the Pope replied by a personal promise that a Council should be held in Germany if princes and people agreed. The recognition of the authority of General Councils was couched in the vaguest terms, no mention being made of the Council of Basel. Instead of annulling the censures against German ecclesiastics, the Pope agreed to restore the Archbishops of Trier and Cologne to their sees. Instead of accepting the reforming decrees of Basel, he promised to send a Legate to frame a Concordat with the German Church. Thus, on each of the four main points at issue, the result of the year's negotiations was the same. Rome had conceded just enough to make the restoration of obedience possible without loss of dignity to Germany, but the real advantage in every case lay on the side of the Pope.

In the midst of the negotiations Eugenius IV had fallen seriously ill, and the ceremony of the restoration of German obedience was made at the bedside of a dying Pope. On 7 February the Germans assembled in the Pope's presence, and Æneas spoke the following words in the name of the whole company: “As your Holiness has vouchsafed to accede to our requests, we proffer you obedience. By virtue of the authority committed to us, we lay aside the neutrality, and recognise you as Roman, Catholic, and

¹ Pastor, *History of the Popes*, vol. i. p. 403.

² Raynaldus, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, 1447, Nos. 5-7. No. 7 is a secret protest from Eugenius IV to the effect that sickness prevented him from giving due consideration to these concessions, and that, in making them, he had no intention of derogating from the authority and privileges of the Papacy.

undoubted Pope.”¹ “Ye have done well,” Eugenius answered in a weak voice, and handing the Bulls to Æneas, he dismissed the embassy with his blessing. The successful issue of the negotiations was at once proclaimed in a public Consistory, and “great thanks were rendered to God who had reunited the Church when it was weak and divided, and had brought the bark of S. Peter into a quiet haven, when it seemed about to succumb to the violence of the storm.”²

So far as it can be ascribed to any one man, this remarkable political achievement was the work of Æneas. But for him the negotiations must have broken down at every point. But for him the gulf which separated Germany and Rome could hardly have been bridged. Much can be said in criticism of his methods, although it must be remembered that Æneas himself provides the material for such criticism, and probably there are few diplomatists who would care to record their share in the manipulation of a crisis with quite the same frankness. As regards the issue of his labours, it was the best, if not the only solution possible. So long as Germany remained, not a nation, but an aggregate of separatist interests, she could not be a centre of unity either in Church or State. Politically she must be held together by the faltering hand of the Emperor; ecclesiastically she could only unite under the stepmotherly guardianship of the Pope.

¹ Fea, p. 104.

² *Hist. Frid.* III, p. 132.

CHAPTER V

THE CORONATION OF FREDERICK III

THE years which Æneas spent in manipulating the threads of European diplomacy were no less important for the change which they wrought in his private life. When he first came to Germany his morals and habits were of the lowest order. To this period belong such unedifying productions as the famous letter to his father, telling him of the existence of an illegitimate son, born of an Englishwoman named Elizabeth whom he had met at Strassburg in the spring of 1442, and whose knowledge of Italian had given him the rare delight of hearing himself greeted in the Tuscan tongue. "It is a great pleasure to me that my seed should bear fruit," writes the shameless culprit, "and that something of me should survive when I die. I thank God that a little Æneas will play round you and my mother, and be a comfort to his grandparents in his father's stead." ¹ When the Emperor's young ward, Sigismund of Tyrol, wanted an elegant love-letter to send to his mistress, he applied to Æneas as to a recognised authority on such matters. "Some perhaps would have denied your request," replied the man of nearly forty to the boy of sixteen, "but I am prepared to grant it. He who does not love in youth does so in old age, when he makes himself ridiculous, and becomes

¹ Æneas Silvius to Silvio Piccolomini, 20 Sept. 1443 (Wolkan, Ep. 78; *Opera*, Ep. 15, and elsewhere). Another illegitimate child was born to Æneas in Scotland, but both children appear to have died in infancy. Cf. Æneas Silvius to Silvio Piccolomini, 19 Nov. 1444 (Wolkan, Ep. 162; Voigt, Ep. 130).

a subject of gossip among the vulgar.”¹ The following year saw the production of Æneas’s novel *Eurialus et Lucretia*—a love-story of a coarse and passionate type, for which Pius II felt himself bound to apologise in later life.² His letters to his intimates at this time are by no means pleasant reading. They abound in allusions to Venus and Bacchus, the twin deities of the loose-liver, and on every page there is some coarse jest or vulgar innuendo. In short, Æneas at this period stood for all that was worst in humanism. He was frivolous, profligate, pagan, and apparently without vestige of shame or reticence. Nevertheless, in one respect he rose above the standard of his associates. In an age when clerical immorality was rife, he steadily refused to be ordained until he had forsaken his dissolute habits. “As yet I have avoided taking holy orders,” he wrote to Piero da Noceto in 1444, “for I fear chastity; although a praiseworthy virtue, it is easier in word than in deed, and it becomes philosophers rather than poets.”³ So Æneas remained a layman, until his hot blood had cooled and the wiles of Venus had ceased to charm him.

Ere long, as public life grew more absorbing, his letters assume a new tone. There was a refined and serious side to his complex personality which must always have despised his vices, and now, under the beneficent influence of success, his better nature triumphed. One of the earliest signs of a less frivolous attitude towards life is a letter to a Bohemian friend making inquiries about the purchase of a Bible. He had heard that Bibles were to be had comparatively cheaply in Prag, and he was anxious to buy a copy containing both Testaments in one volume. “I am getting old,” he wrote, “and worldly learning no longer becomes or delights me. I wish to steep myself in the Gospels and to drink that water of which he that drinketh shall never

¹ Æneas Silvius to Duke Sigismund, 13 Dec. 1443 (Wolkan, Ep. 104; *Opera*, Ep. 122, etc.).

² Wolkan, Ep. 152 (3 July 1444), for *Eurialus et Lucretia*; *Opera*, Ep. 395, for Pius II’s apology.

³ 18 Feb. 1444 (Wolkan, Ep. 125; *Opera*, Ep. 50, etc.).

taste death. . . . I care little for the pleasures of this world, and I only desire to serve God. Yet as I am a lover of letters, I do not know how I can please God better than in literary work ; and as the Bible contains the first principles of sacred learning I wish to possess a copy.”¹ In March 1446 the decisive step was taken, and Æneas was ordained deacon in Vienna. “ He must be a miserable and graceless man who does not in the end return to his better self, enter into his own heart and amend his life, who does not consider the world to come. Alas ! I have done evil enough, nay more than enough. But I have come to myself. Oh, that it may not be too late ! ”² So wrote our hero to a German friend in telling him of his ordination. It cannot be said that any radical change took place in his nature,—Æneas remained Æneas to the last, even under the Papal vestments of Pius,—but from that time forward his outward life was transformed. He ceased to make use of his title of “ poet,” and began to interest himself mainly in philosophical and historical studies. As far as morals were concerned he lived a blameless life, no word was ever breathed against his character.

Some doubt exists as to the actual date of Æneas’s ordination as priest,³ but he was certainly in full orders when he tendered the obedience of Germany to Eugenius IV in February 1447. Now that the negotiations were satisfactorily concluded he could look for some substantial reward for his services, and there were powerful friends who were ready to recommend him for the next vacant bishopric. For the moment, however, all thoughts were concentrated upon the death-bed of Eugenius IV. The old Pope was growing rapidly worse, and it seemed as if each day must be his last. Rome was in a state of suspense. The merchants were taking their more valuable goods out

¹ Æneas Silvius to Johann Tuschek, 31 Oct. 1444 (Wolkan, Ep. 159 ; Voigt, Ep. 127).

² Æneas Silvius to Johann Vront, 8 March 1446 (*Opera*, Ep. 92).

³ Voigt (vol. i. p. 367) says that he was ordained in Rome in July 1446. Cf., however, Wolkan, i. p. xxv.

of the city, the streets were infested by robbers, and, outside the walls, the presence of Alfonso of Naples with a strong force threatened the freedom of the approaching Conclave. Meanwhile the intrepid Pope, who had fought so long and so stubbornly with his many foes, was making a gallant fight with death. When the Archbishop of Florence wished to administer extreme unction, Eugenius bade him stay his hand. "You think that I do not know my time," he said, "but I am still strong; when the hour is come I will send for you." ¹ But the enemy could not be kept at bay, and on 23 February the end came. In a letter to Frederick III, Æneas tells the story of Eugenius's last hours, and gives his final verdict upon the man whom he had judged from very different standpoints in the course of the last sixteen years. Eugenius IV, he says in conclusion, summoned a General Council and also dissolved it. He was deposed by the Council of Basel and "himself deposed the deponents." He lost the obedience of Germany and then recovered it. He was a prisoner in Rome, was forced to fly from the city, and eventually returned thither in triumph. "It would be hard to find a Pope who has experienced as much adversity and, at the same time, as much prosperity. . . . His worst faults were that he had no moderation, and that in all his endeavours he thought only of what he desired, and not of what he could accomplish." ²

Æneas remained in Rome for the funeral of Eugenius IV, and for the election and coronation of his successor. He and other members of the German embassy were made doorkeepers of the Conclave, an office which must have reminded Æneas of his share in the election of the anti-Pope seven years before. The same spirit—critical, half-mocking, and wholly detached—in which he described the proceedings at Basel inspires his account of the Roman

¹ Æneas Silvius to the Emperor Frederick III (Muratori, *Rev. Ital. Script.*, vol. iii. pt. 2, pp. 878–98).

² Æneas Silvius to Frederick III (Muratori, iii. pt. 2, p. 890).

Conclave. "Amid these events," he observes, "there were two ceremonies which provoked laughter." The first was the daily procession of boxes containing food for the Cardinals immured within the convent of S. Maria sopra Minerva. Each Cardinal had his separate box, and this was followed by the members of his household and other dependents, so trained to the habit of adulation that, in the absence of the Cardinal himself, they actually did reverence to the box which held his dinner. The other piece of ritual which called forth our hero's scorn took place round the funeral pyre of Eugenius, where, in mid-winter, "four clad in mournful garments fanned away the flies that did not exist, and made breezes for the Pope who was not present." Our practically-minded friend condemned one rite as superstitious and the other as childish. "But," he adds, "some allowance must be made for custom." ¹

Popular opinion had fixed upon the rich and powerful Prospero Colonna as the next Pope, but, as Æneas remarked, quoting a well-known Roman proverb, "He who enters the Conclave a Pope comes out a Cardinal." ² After some abortive scrutinies, the necessary majority of two-thirds was obtained by Tommaso Parentucelli, Bishop of Bologna. Nicholas v, as the new Pope called himself, in remembrance of his patron Niccolò Albergata, had little save learning to commend him for his high office. He sprang from an obscure family at Sarzana, and could not even produce a coat-of-arms to quarter with the crossed keys of the Papacy. His election was, in fact, a triumph of humanism. Hard work and a good education had enabled him to compete successfully with rank and wealth, just because the age had recognised that in politics, as in every other sphere, knowledge implied power. Æneas must have viewed the election of his colleague with mixed feelings. On the one hand, it could not fail to act as a spur to his own ambition.

¹ Muratori, iii. pt. 2, p. 892.

² *Ibid.*, p. 893: "Exire Cardinalem qui Pontifex intrat Conclave."

A prize which could be won by Tommaso Parentucelli must also be within the reach of Æneas Silvius Piccolomini. Yet, on the other hand, he knew that Nicholas v did not approve of him and that he could not hope to be among his favourites. As a matter of fact, Æneas was among the first to receive preferment from the new Pope. Whatever were his personal feelings, Nicholas recognised that Æneas had rendered valuable services to the Papacy, and he did not intend him to go unrewarded. One of the earliest acts of his pontificate was to confirm Eugenius iv's agreement with Germany, and when the Bishop of Trieste died, shortly afterwards, Pope and Emperor sealed their alliance by both nominating Æneas to the vacant see. Our hero was never entirely happy as a courtier, and for some time past he had longed for a means of escape from his wearing, precarious existence. "I am already in the afternoon of life," he wrote in 1443, "and I shall not always be able to run hither and thither. The time will come when I must rest. Would that I had a place where I could rest honourably!"¹ At last he had obtained what he desired. His diocese provided him with a sure haven where he could "serve God and live his own life," far from the storms of courts and politics.

The three years which followed Æneas's appointment to Trieste were of the nature of an interlude, not without incident or interest, but standing apart from the main current of his career. This was chiefly owing to the disgrace of his patron, Chancellor Schlick, which brought all members of the official party at Vienna under a cloud, and left the rival faction, headed by the Emperor's favourites among the Styrian nobility, in possession of the field. Under these circumstances Æneas was glad to escape from the Court, where his star was no longer in the ascendant, and to bury himself in his diocese, dividing his time between study and episcopal duties. Thus his share in the final

¹ Æneas Silvius to Kaspar Schlick, 28 Dec. 1443 (Wolkan, Ep. 108; *Opera*, Ep. 54, etc.).

stages of the ecclesiastical settlement was small in comparison with his former activity. In his retreat at Trieste he heard of the signing of the Concordat of Vienna (February 1448), embodying the terms of alliance between the Papacy and the German Church, and of the extinction of the wan ghost which had once been the Council of Basel. At first Felix v was inclined to be obstinate, and spoke of "a certain Tommaso Calandrini of Sarzana, whom some call Nicholas v";¹ but ere long Nicholas's conciliatory policy triumphed, and in April 1449 Felix resigned his claims to the Papacy, receiving in exchange a Cardinal's hat. Meanwhile the little company of Fathers went through the forms of electing Nicholas v and of decreeing the dissolution of the Council. John of Segovia retired to a Spanish bishopric and devoted himself to Oriental studies. Louis d'Allemand spent the brief remainder of his life in his diocese of Arles, immersed in good works and venerated for his holiness. "So, by means of the Emperor Frederick, and by the wisdom of Nicholas, the disease of the schism was brought to an end."²

Schlick's fall placed Æneas in a difficult position at the Imperial Court, but it did not deprive him of the Emperor's confidence. Frederick valued his Sienese secretary for his own sake, especially as an instrument for dealing with Italian affairs, and the monotony of life at Trieste was broken by various diplomatic missions,³ of which the most important are Æneas's two visits to Milan in 1447 and 1449. In August 1447, Filippo Maria Visconti died without male heirs, and Æneas was sent to claim Milan as a lapsed fief of the Empire. He thus became an actor in the complicated drama which ended in the failure of Milan's last attempt at self-government, and the triumph of the house of Sforza.⁴ When he arrived in Milan a Republic had

¹ Mansi, *Concilia*, xxxi. 188 (Bull of Felix v to Charles vii of France).

² Fea, p. 114.

³ Cf. *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 14.

⁴ Cf. *Commentarii*, lib. i. pp. 14-6; also Fea, pp. 110-3; and *Hist. Frid.* III pp. 139-63.

already been established, but the citizens, knowing how sorely they needed protection, were ready to recognise the suzerainty of the Emperor, if this could be done without sacrifice of their new-born autonomy. With characteristic perspicacity, Æneas at once grasped the situation, and he was anxious to accept the obedience of the Republic, which would give the Emperor at least a foothold in Milan, and would leave the way open for a further assertion of his authority in the future. But the other members of the embassy would be content with nothing short of full possession, and "by wanting too much they lost all." The Imperial envoys departed without having come to terms, and the infant Republic was left to carry on an unequal struggle against the arms of Venice, internal dissension, and the ambitions of her great *condottiere*, Francesco Sforza. When Æneas returned to Milan, two years later, the struggle was well-nigh ended. Francesco Sforza was besieging the city, and all the country round lay in the grip of his armies. He who was about to become Duke of Milan wished to avoid the risk of the prey being torn from his grasp by preventing the Imperial envoys from entering the city. Thus all roads to Milan were guarded, and it was only by means of night-journeys on unfrequented ways that Æneas and his companions contrived to reach their destination. Within Milan all was confusion. The Republic had entered upon its death-agony, and its leaders were ready to promise anything that might bring relief from the siege and aid against Sforza. Thus Æneas was charged with highly favourable terms to submit to the Emperor, but the disaffection was such that the magistrates did not dare permit him to address the citizens in a public assembly. Before he left Milan he received a nocturnal visit from one of the chief officers of the Republic,¹ who offered to secure the submission of the city to Frederick III without further negotiation, by the simple expedient of creating a popular rising

¹ Carlo Gonzaga, the Captain of the People, who not long afterwards deserted to Sforza.

in his favour. "This plan, although likely to succeed, seemed hazardous to Æneas; granted that it would be a great and memorable exploit, he saw that it could not be accomplished without danger, and that it by no means became his priestly office."¹ Somewhat reluctantly, it may be, he chose the path of prudence, and declined to entertain the proposal. He then went with letters of safe-conduct to Sforza's camp, in order to ascertain the victorious captain's attitude towards the Empire in the event of his becoming master of Milan. Soldier-like, Francesco Sforza was chiefly interested in hearing how the Imperial envoys had contrived to penetrate through his lines and enter Milan. Æneas, however, was deeply impressed by his force and ability, and the acquaintance which began between the ambassador and the soldier of fortune in the camp outside Milan, ripened into a firm friendship between Pope and Duke. When in February 1450 Milan opened her gates to Sforza, Æneas hailed his triumph as a well-earned success. "I deem him a true Duke," he writes, "who, as the leader of an army, has waged many successful wars, rather than him who is born of a ducal father and who leads a life of ease and luxury."²

Æneas's pastoral experience before he became a Bishop was not extensive, but he had been in possession of at least two benefices, and he has left evidence of some slight effort to play his part by the people committed to his charge. In 1443 the Emperor presented him with a cure in the Sarantana valley, near Botzen, and his clever sketch of the remote Tyrolese parish is clearly based on personal knowledge.³ There was only one way of approach to the valley, he tells us, and that was steep and difficult. For three-parts of the year the place was snow-bound, and the inhabitants were confined to their houses, where they employed themselves in carving boxes and other articles to

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 16.

² Fea, p. 113.

³ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 9. Cf. also Æneas to Kaspar Schlick, 28 Dec. 1443 (Wolkan, Ep. 108; *Opera*, Ep. 54, etc.).

sell at Botzen or Trent. If anybody living at a distance from the church died during the winter, the corpse was placed out in the snow and so preserved until the spring, when the priest went round the parish collecting the dead and performing the funeral rites. Games of chess and dice were the principal forms of recreation, and at these the peasants showed remarkable skill: their flocks were their chief source of wealth, and also of food and drink; many had never tasted wine. No fear of war ever troubled them, no thirst for riches or honours disturbed their peace. They would have been the happiest of mortals, thought their some-time pastor, had they but realised their good fortune and bridled their passions.

About a year later, Æneas was presented to the living of Aspach in Bavaria by the Bishop of Passau. He composed a sermon to mark his appointment in which he instructed his parishioners in their duties (laying especial stress on that of paying tithe promptly), and spoke of the responsibility which rested upon him for the welfare of their souls. "I will strive not only to make you better, but myself also," he concludes, "so that we may enter eternal life together."¹ However far he might fall short in practice, Æneas could always be relied upon to say the right thing suitably and attractively. It is characteristic of the irregularities of the day that he should have held both these livings as a layman. In the case of Aspach, however, objections were raised to his tenure, a fact which is partly responsible for his decision to take orders in 1446.²

Of his sojourn at Trieste he has left little but the bare record, yet it is not hard to picture his life in the pleasant seaport, like himself subject to the Emperor, but in all else Italian. There is no reason to suppose that he was greatly interested in his episcopal duties, but it was part of his nature to take pleasure in performing becomingly

¹ Mansi, *Pii II Orationes*, vol. i. p. 54.

² Cf. Æneas to Campisio, 21 May 1445 (Wolkan, Ep. 170; Voigt, Ep. 138).

and well whatever tasks fell to his lot, and he doubtless acquitted himself creditably in his new position. For the rest, he found unfailing solace in his literary work. Isolated as he was from cultivated society, he kept in touch with the world of learning by means of his correspondence, and in 1447 he turned his attention to collecting and editing his letters. The manuscript, with his own corrections in the margin, is preserved in Rome,¹ and forms one of the principal sources of subsequent collections. He was acquainted with the leading scholars of the day, and occasional letters passed between them; but his two faithful friends, Giovanni Campisio and Piero da Noceto, wrote to him constantly, and his correspondence with them formed a connecting link with Italy throughout the years of his exile. In the autumn of 1443 he was seized with a desire to obtain Leonardo Aretino's translation of the *Politics* of Aristotle, and a lengthy correspondence on the subject ensued between himself and Campisio. "I am glad that you have found the books of the *Politics* in Aretino's translation," wrote Æneas; "I have decided to buy them, and if they are not to be had for a smaller price than you name, I will send the money."² Campisio replies that his friend is showing himself "less liberal than I could wish," in thus haggling over the price; if he possessed the book he would send it to Æneas as a gift, but he will do his utmost to make a good bargain, "so that you will have no cause to judge me an imprudent buyer."³ Later on he reports that the book is not to be bought, but that he is having a copy made, and the scribe is already half-way through his task. In the same letter he records the death of the translator, the learned Aretino.⁴ "I rejoice that Poggio holds his place in Florence," replies Æneas, "but

¹ "Chigi Collection," Codex J, vi. 208. Cf. Wolkan, *Die Briefe*, etc.

² 14 Oct. 1443 (Wolkan, Ep. 85; *Opera*, Ep. 21, etc.).

³ 13 Nov. 1443 (Wolkan, Ep. 95; *Opera*, Ep. 169, etc.).

⁴ 8 April 1444 (Wolkan, Ep. 134; *Opera*, Ep. 172, etc.). Leonardo Bruni (Aretino) died on 9 March 1444, and was succeeded by Poggio as Chancellor of Florence.

I should be better pleased if that place were not vacant, and Etruria had not lost so great an ornament.”¹ At last, in December 1445, Æneas acknowledges the safe receipt of the coveted volume, but even then he is disappointed to find that one out of the eight books of Leonardo’s translation is missing.² His efforts to procure a copy of the Bible from Prag were more successful, and he wrote a warm letter of thanks to the friend who had procured it for him. “The volume is easy to hold, and the price is less than might be expected for so lengthy a manuscript. You have acted as a true friend and treated my business as if it were your own.”³

It is significant that the few congenial spirits whom Æneas found north of the Alps were, almost all, of Slavonic and not of German origin. The friend who undertook the purchase of the Bible was a certain Johannes Tuschek, secretary to the city of Prag, and an early admirer of our hero’s literary talents. He wrote to inform Æneas of the reputation which the latter possessed in Bohemia, and begged that he might be allowed to see any of his writings.⁴ Two other Bohemians, Prokop von Rabstein and Wenzel von Bochow, were among Æneas’s intimates in the Imperial Chancery, and in 1444 the latter set himself to collect and copy the letters of his gifted colleague.⁵ Among his more exalted literary acquaintances were the Hungarian Archbishop, Dionys Szech, and the cultured Pole, Zbigniew, Bishop of Cracow. Both these men valued Æneas as a humanist and revered the talents which Germany, as a whole, failed to appreciate. Perhaps it was the sympathy which he met with among the non-Teutonic peoples that made him take peculiar interest in the hope of Hungary and Bohemia, young Ladislas Postumus, the grandson of the

¹ 25 June 1444 (Wolkan, Ep. 150; *Opera*, Ep. 51, etc.).

² 1 Dec. 1445 (Wolkan, Ep. 198; *Opera*, Ep. 82, etc.).

³ Æneas to Tuschek, 20 Nov. 1445 (Wolkan, Ep. 194; *Opera*, Ep. 85).

⁴ Cf. Æneas to Tuschek, 1 May 1444, replying to the request (Wolkan, Ep. 138; *Opera*, Ep. 70).

⁵ *Loc. cit.*; and Wolkan’s note, p. 317.

Emperor Sigismund. As the son of Albert of Hapsburg, Ladislás was also the heir of Austria, and he was brought up at the Imperial Court under the guardianship of his cousin, Frederick III. In 1443, Æneas wrote a description of Ladislás's life and surroundings to Archbishop Dionys, being certain that "your reverence desires nothing on earth as much as the boy's welfare."¹ Ladislás was, then, not quite four years old, and the whole Court had fallen victim to his charm and beauty. The sight of the high-spirited child, riding gaily about the palace on his wooden horse, would be enough, thought Æneas, to melt the heart of the fiercest among his rebel subjects. Like all true humanists, Æneas was interested in education, and in 1450, during his retirement at Trieste, he composed his treatise *De Liberorum Educatione*, unfolding a scheme for the up-bringing of the ten-year-old Ladislás, after the approved methods of humanist educators.²

In 1448 the signing of the Concordat of Vienna marked the conclusion of a long struggle, and gave Æneas an opportunity for reviewing the Conciliar movement as a whole. The result was his History, *De Rebus Basiliæ Gestis Commentarius*,³ our hero's last word upon the much discussed theme of the Council of Basel. Apart from these two works, the years at Trieste represented an interlude in his literary no less than in his active career. The cycle of his political tracts was completed by the publication, in 1446, of *De ortu et autoritate Romani Imperii*,⁴ a work which is as unreservedly "Papal" and orthodox as the Basel Dialogues were "conciliar" and revolutionary. His great historical writings, such as the *History of Frederick III* and the *History of Bohemia*, were not yet begun. It seems, indeed, as if Æneas did not find quiet and retirement as

¹ Æneas to Dionys Szech, Archbishop of Gran, 16 Sept. 1443 (Wolkan, Ep. 76; *Opera*, Ep. 13, etc.).

² *Opera*, pp. 965-91. Cf. also Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre and other Humanist Educators*, containing an English translation of *De Liberorum Educatione*.

³ Fea, pp. 31-115.

⁴ Goldast, *Monarchiæ*, pt. 2, p. 1558.

attractive as he had once pictured them. Inaction tried his spirited energies, and very soon he became discontented and restless. The death of Chancellor Schlick, in July 1449, was a severe shock to him. He regarded his former master with gratitude and affection, and the news of his death combined with the circumstances of his own life at Trieste to deepen his depression. "I am not yet fifty, and already I have more friends among the dead than among the living," he writes to Cardinal Carvajal.¹ His thoughts run upon the brevity of life, its evils and its uncertainties, until they take shape in a vision of the other world, in which he meets and talks with those whom he has known in former days.

He is walking, it seems to him, in a dense beech-wood, and he sees a company of distinguished-looking people sitting together and conversing gravely. Presently a form detaches itself from the group. It is Kaspar Schlick, who says, in reply to Æneas's questions, that he has come to a place where departed spirits make expiation for their sins upon earth. The figure nearest to him is that of Eugenius IV; hard by is his predecessor, Martin V. Schlick's former masters, the Emperors Sigismund and Albert, are both there, as are also Filippo Maria Visconti, the Cardinal of Taranto, and a host of others who had played a prominent part in Æneas's world. Every day, Schlick told him, added to their number, owing to the reckless ambition of princes and republics, who did not hesitate to plunge whole nations into war for the sake of increasing their territories. Faith and justice had returned to heaven, fraud and unrighteousness reigned supreme on earth; few praised virtue and none practised it: there were sins enough to be purged at the approaching Jubilee, yet how many of the pilgrims who flocked to Rome would go with a more serious purpose than that of seeing the sights? Here Æneas cut short the Chancellor's moralisings in order to know whether he would find Cardinal Cesarini among the assembled company. "He is not with us," was the reply; "from the

¹ 13 Nov. 1449 (Voigt, Ep. 184, pp. 394-7).

Hungarian battle-field he took the direct path to heaven, where he now tastes the joys prepared for those who witness for Christ with their life-blood." Then the vision faded and Æneas was left alone and sad, "desirous of knowing many things," and yet convinced of the essential truth of what had been revealed to him. On this occasion, he assures Carvajal, the gate of his dream was made of horn, and not of ivory.

In the year of Jubilee, Æneas was recalled to the Imperial Court, where important work awaited him. The Emperor wished to wed Leonora of Portugal, the niece of Alfonso, King of Naples, and, at the same time, he had determined to follow the custom of his predecessors and to seek coronation at the hands of the Pope. With these plans in view, he turned to the Bishop of Trieste as to his natural link with Italy, and upon Æneas devolved the entire organisation of the last Imperial coronation which took place in Rome. He was sent to Italy as a forerunner, to negotiate with the King of Naples, and to prepare the way in Rome for the Emperor's coming; throughout the course of Frederick's expedition he acted as mediator between the Emperor and the Italians. The whole episode, indeed, stands out upon the pages of history as a gorgeous and somewhat antiquated pageant of which Æneas was the highly efficient stage-manager.

Æneas crossed the Alps on his preliminary mission before the close of 1450, and on his way South he stayed with his cousin Jacopo Tolomei, who was a judge at Ferrara. Tolomei had some startling news to impart: his wife had just written from Siena to say that the Bishop was dead and that Æneas was appointed as his successor.¹ Our hero hurried on to Siena, in a state of joyful anticipation, to find that the news was true, and that he was about to become Bishop of his own city. His advent was hailed with enthusiasm, and but for his prudent resolve to await the receipt of the Papal letters, he would have been given

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 17.

immediate possession of the temporalities of the see. On his return from Rome, in January 1451, the necessary formalities were completed, and Æneas entered Siena in state, beneath a gilded *baldacchino*, to be enthroned in the familiar Duomo amid the plaudits of his fellow-citizens. Those of his admiring relations who had once complained that a promising lawyer was wasting his time over new-fangled studies, were now obliged to acknowledge that he had chosen his profession well. In the company of "the poets and orators" Æneas had gone further than he could ever have hoped to go if he had clung to the beaten paths of Jurisprudence.

Meanwhile his conduct of the Emperor's business had been attended with success, both in Naples and Rome. Leonora was willing to reject all other suitors for the sake of being called Empress, and it was arranged that she should come to Italy in time to take part in her bridegroom's coronation. "The title of Emperor," Æneas sarcastically observes, "is held in greater esteem abroad than at home."¹ In October 1451 he was back again in Italy in order to meet Leonora when she landed. His reception in Siena contrasted strangely with the enthusiastic welcome accorded to him earlier in the year. Then "no one could honour and praise Æneas enough; now he entered the city unwelcomed, no procession came out to meet him, few people visited him at his palace, and he heard that many spoke ill of him in the public places. But he bore it all calmly, and laughed to himself at the fickleness of fortune."² The prospect of the Emperor's visit had, in fact, reduced all Italy to a state of nervous trepidation. Nicholas v wrote panic-stricken letters begging Æneas to come to Rome at once, and urging the postponement of the coronation. Siena feared that Æneas would use his influence with the Emperor to overthrow her constitution and restore the nobility to power. The citizens eyed his smallest action with suspicion, and when he allowed a

¹ *Hist. Frid. III.*, p. 169.

² *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 18.

German colleague, Michael von Pfullendorf, to be buried in the Duomo, it was treated as an unwarrantable usurpation of civic privileges. At last the situation in Siena grew so unpleasant that Æneas betook himself to Talamone, where Leonora was expected to land. For sixty weary days he waited at the dull seaport, whiling away the time, indefatigable sight-seer that he was, in visiting the places of interest in the neighbourhood. He saw the rocky promontory of Monte Argentario, and the deserted Etruscan town of Ansedonia, while the massive fortifications of the ancient Portus Herculis filled him with amazement.¹ The news that Leonora had landed at Leghorn cut short his expeditions, and he hurried northward to meet the bride at Pisa, where she was committed to his charge with all due formality by the Portuguese ambassador.² Meanwhile the Emperor had arrived in Siena, and here, on 24 February 1452, outside the Porta Camollia, where the memorial column stands to-day, the bridal pair met and embraced. The meeting has been immortalised in the most gracious of Pintoricchio's frescoes, and it was a ceremony calculated to live long in the annals of a pageant-loving people. A gorgeous procession went out to meet the bride.³ At its head rode Albert of Austria, the Emperor's brother, resplendent in cloth of gold, and surrounded by a band of cavaliers "singing beautiful and joyous songs"; next to him came the youthful Ladislas, his long fair hair falling in graceful curls over his shoulders. The clergy and magistrates of the city, the professors of the University, and four hundred charming Sienese ladies swelled the throng. Last of all came the expectant bridegroom mounted on a magnificent black charger, supported on either side by the Papal Legates, and attended by a galaxy

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 19.

² *Loc. cit.* Fifteen days were wasted before this punctilious gentleman would consent to surrender Leonora to anyone but the Emperor in person.

³ Cf. *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 20; also Fumi and Lisini, *L'Incontro di Federico III con Eleonora di Portogallo*, Siena, 1878.



ÆNEAS SILVIUS PRESENTS LEONORA OF PORTUGAL TO FREDERICK III

Fresco by PINTORICCHIO

Piccolomini Library, Siena

of richly attired knights and barons. Presently a cry of joy announced the approach of Bishop Æneas with his precious charge. Frederick turned pale with anxiety, but as the procession drew near, and he saw the youthful bloom and royal bearing of his sixteen-year-old bride, "his colour returned, and he rejoiced to find that his spouse was even more beautiful than report had painted her."¹ Leonora was dressed in cloth of gold surmounted by a richly brocaded mantle; she wore a little black fur hat, and her fair hair was visible beneath her hood. She had bright dark eyes, a small mouth, and a brilliant complexion: even so experienced a critic as Æneas could find no fault in her appearance. The sight of her charms roused Frederick from his habitual apathy; springing impulsively from his horse, he took her in his arms without further ceremony.

A week of gay doings followed, in which the jealousies and suspicions of the past were completely forgotten. Æneas tasted unalloyed joy in exhibiting the glories of his beloved Siena to the admiring Germans, and, at the same time, giving proof to his fellow-citizens of the favour which he enjoyed with the Emperor. The beauty and accomplishments of the Sienese ladies were particularly gratifying to his pride, and he does not fail to draw attention to the elegant oration delivered by the young wife of one of the magistrates. This gifted lady instructed Frederick and Leonora in their conjugal duties, "and spoke so wisely and eloquently that her hearers were stupefied with admiration."² Throughout the ensuing journey to Rome Æneas's star was in the ascendant. As the cavalcade wound its

¹ *Hist. Frid. III.*, pp. 269-70.

² *Hist. Frid. III.*, p. 272; cf. also Malavolti, *De' fatti e Guerre dei Sanesi*, p. 38. The learned lady, Battista Petrucci by name, was not without feminine vanity. The Emperor was so much pleased with her oration that he offered to show her any sign of favour that she might choose; whereupon she asked, and obtained leave, to wear the clothes and jewels of which the sumptuary laws forbade her to make use (Malavolti, *op. cit.*).

way over the steep slopes of Monte Cimino, the Emperor drew rein beside him, and said in half-jesting prophecy, "We are going to Rome. I seem to see you a Cardinal. Nay, you will soar still higher to the Chair of S. Peter. Do not despise me when you attain to that high honour."¹ On 8 March the party came in sight of the Eternal City, and Æneas's heart glowed with passionate pride of race as the Emperor's wondering gaze ranged over Hadrian's Mole, the Baths of Diocletian, the Pantheon, the Colosseum, the Capitol, and all the splendid heritage of the past. "Not in vain," he exclaimed, "does a man endure hardship, if it is given him to see Rome, the chief of the nations, and the capital of the world."² Frederick spent the night outside the walls of Rome, while Æneas went on ahead to prepare the Pope for his arrival. He visited Nicholas in bed, and discoursed to him at length of the Emperor's pacific disposition, assuring him that his fears were entirely misplaced. "The error of suspicion is less dangerous than the error of over-confidence,"³ was the Pope's grim reply. But here, as in Siena, the actual arrival of the Emperor put an end to all alarms. Nicholas v received his guest, next day, in the Portico of S. Peter's, and this solemn meeting was the prelude to many friendly interviews between the twin heads of Christendom. The coronation was fixed for 19 March, the fifth anniversary of Nicholas's coronation as Pope. Tradition forbade an uncrowned Emperor to show himself in the city, but Frederick "found it tedious to remain at home,"⁴ and insisted on spending the ten days of waiting in seeing the sights. On 16 May his wedding took place, and he was crowned with the iron crown of Lombardy as a preliminary to his assumption of the golden crown of Empire. When the great day arrived, Pope and Cardinals assembled before the high altar, while two pulpits were erected for Frederick and Leonora at the entrance to the Choir. Proceedings began with Frederick's oath

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 20.

² *Hist. Frid. III*, p. 275.

³ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 20.

⁴ *Hist. Frid. III*, pp. 281-2.

of obedience to the Pope, taken, Æneas tells us, "in the form used by Louis, the son of Charles the Great."¹ He was then made a canon of S. Peter's, he donned the Imperial tunic, mantle, and sandals, and was anointed with the sacred oil. The Pope began Mass, and Frederick and Leonora returned to their places until the time came for Frederick's investiture with the Imperial insignia, "the sceptre which denotes kingly power, the orb which stands for dominion of the world, and the sword which indicates rights of warfare."² Finally, the magnificent jewelled crown was placed on his head, Leonora received her crown, and Pope and Emperor walked hand in hand to the door of S. Peter's, whence they rode in procession to the ancient Basilica of S. Maria in Cosmedin. On the bridge of S. Angelo, the Emperor dubbed three hundred knights, and the day's ceremonies terminated with a banquet at the Lateran, in which "I too," says Æneas, "had a place at the Emperor's table."³

Much as Æneas appreciated the splendid pageantry and historical significance of the scenes which he witnessed, he was too clear-sighted not to realise their fundamental unreality. Frederick had no power in Italy, and not a single assertion of authority marked his visit. He received the Lombard crown in Rome, instead of at Milan, or Monza, because Francesco Sforza was in possession of the Duchy, and the Emperor did not wish to recognise a usurpation that he was powerless to prevent. The same artificial reproduction of a vanished past showed itself in the very details of the coronation ceremonies. The reputed insignia of Charles the Great had been brought from Nürnberg for use on this occasion. "When I examined the sword," reports our observant friend, "I found that it belonged not to the first Charles but to the fourth, for I saw the lion of Bohemia engraved upon it."⁴ So, too, Æneas deplures the fact that the three hundred upon whom the Emperor

¹ *Hist. Frid. III.*, p. 291.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 295.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 291-2.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 292.

conferred knighthood were chosen, not for their military valour, but for their ability to pay the dues which would fill Frederick's empty purse. "If scholars, weak in body and cowardly in spirit, are not ashamed to assume military honours, why should not soldiers seek Doctors' degrees?" he asks. But the rewards of scholarship were being given on the same system, and the Emperor conferred the degree of Doctor upon many men in Italy "with whom gold took the place of learning."¹ Æneas's real opinion with regard to Frederick III and his shadowy Empire is summed up in the allusion to the image of Daniel's vision with which he prefaces his account of the coronation. Once the legs of iron were a fitting symbol of the strength and cohesion of the Roman Empire. "Alas! to-day it is burdened with little of its former power. We have come, it seems, to the era of the feet of clay."²

Frederick and Leonora spent Easter at the Court of Naples, as the guests of King Alfonso, while Æneas remained in Rome in charge of the young King Ladislas. At this time Austrians, Bohemians, and Hungarians were plotting to wrest Ladislas from Frederick's guardianship, and Æneas's responsibility was by no means light. The news of a conspiracy came to the Pope's ears; he sent for Æneas in the dead of night, and warned him to keep strict watch over the boy's apartments, lest they should wake in the morning to find the bird flown. Thus the danger was averted, but after this episode the Pope was so afraid of treachery that he would not even allow Ladislas to go out hunting with the Cardinals.³ Ere long the Emperor returned, and, after a few farewell interviews and complimentary speeches, the Imperial visit was at an end: Frederick started on his homeward journey with Æneas in his train. The party travelled by way of Venice, where the Emperor spent his time in rambling about the city, disguised as a private individual in order to be able to drive

¹ *Hist. Frid. III*, pp. 293-4.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 288-9.

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 305-6.

better bargains with the Venetian shopkeepers.¹ Both Frederick and Æneas left Italy with regret. The Emperor was loth to end a pleasant holiday and to take up life again amid rebellious subjects and troublesome Diets. Æneas felt that he was returning to exile, without the consolation of the Cardinal's hat which he had hoped would come as the reward of his activity.

¹ *Hist. Frid. III*, p. 337.

CHAPTER VI

THE FALL OF CONSTANTINOPLE

AS the Emperor crossed the frontier on his return to Germany, a terrific thunderstorm broke upon the travellers. To Æneas it seemed the foreboding of disaster, "the end of Italian delights, and the beginning of German sorrows."¹ Life north of the Alps had never been congenial to him, and with his advancing years and failing health it was rapidly becoming intolerable. The Court was seldom at Vienna for any length of time. Frederick's favourite residence was at Neustadt, a little country town thirty miles from the capital, where he could spend his time in hunting and in the cultivation of his magnificent garden, doing his best to live as if responsibilities of Empire did not exist. Æneas once wrote a charming description of Neustadt, of the stately palace set in the midst of woods and vineyards, of the gardens rich in fruit and flowers, of the good air and excellent hunting. "I do not wonder," he declared, "that the Emperor takes pleasure in a place that abounds in all delights."² Nevertheless, he—and, indeed, the majority of Frederick's courtiers—found Neustadt insufferably dull; and Neustadt itself seemed a centre of life and civilisation in comparison with Frederick's other favourite resorts, the capitals of his hereditary provinces—Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola. Even to the

¹ *Hist. Frid. III*, p. 343.

² Æneas Silvius to Giovanni Campisio, 8 June 1444 (Wolkan, Ep. 148; Voigt, Ep. 115).

Germans these remote mountain districts appeared only half-civilised, and to Æneas, life in the comfortless, scantily equipped castle at Graz, S. Veit, or Laibach must have stood for all that was rough and barbarous. In 1453 the Court spent practically the whole summer at Graz. Although Æneas could not fail to appreciate the picturesque charm of his surroundings, the keen mountain air chilled his gouty limbs, and he had neither the health nor the spirits to face discomfort with his wonted serenity. "I am afflicted and tormented not only in body but in mind," he wrote to Goro Lolli; "for who is there with so iron a spirit that it does not suffer when the body suffers? . . . I, indeed, in spite of my anguish, am not so distressed that I cannot call back my courage, and remember that my pains must soon be ended either by recovery or death."¹ He was ill enough to look upon death almost in the light of a release, and in his suffering and depression he longed more than ever to be back in Italy, among old friends and familiar surroundings. "Day and night," he cried, "I have the sweet soil of my country before my eyes." His thoughts flew, not to Campisio and Piero da Noceto, the friends of his public life, but to his mother, Goro Lolli, Mariano Sozzini, Giorgio Andrenzio, and other companions of his youth. His dearest wish was to return to Siena; he had already asked leave of absence from the Emperor, and intended to start as soon as he felt strong enough for the journey.² Before the end of the year he actually sent orders to his Vicar in Siena to prepare the episcopal palace for his arrival;³ but, for one cause and another, his departure was postponed, and it was not until 1455 that he again crossed the Alps.

If Æneas craved for home, it may well be asked, why did he not sever his connection with the Imperial Court, and take up his residence in Siena? He himself supplies

¹ *Opera*, Ep. 146, 3 Sept. 1453.

² *Opera*, Ep. 146; cf. also Epp. 132, 133, 136, 143, etc.

³ Æneas to his Vicar, 10 Dec. 1453 (*Weiss*, Ep. 91).

the answer. "While I remain with the Emperor," he wrote, "the Pope and the Cardinals still value me a little. If I were in Siena they would cease to remember me. . . . The Roman Curia only pays respect to a man's reputation, not to the man himself. . . . If I left the Imperial Court I should be dropped, for I should be of no further use."¹ Our hero was a person of strong feelings, and his letters were often made the vehicle of his emotions; but when it came to action, common sense usually prevailed. His will was set upon becoming a Cardinal, and he knew that he could never rest content until this purpose was accomplished; misery at Graz, with hope to sustain him, was more tolerable than a life of ease and obscurity at Siena. So he lingered on at the Imperial Court, and meanwhile both Frederick and Ladislas pressed his claims to the Cardinalate. In Rome his cause was warmly championed by Piero da Noceto, who had also served under Parentucelli, in the old days, in Albergata's household, and had found favour where Æneas had only met with disapproval. Since the accession of Nicholas v, Piero had risen to a high position in the Curia. As a layman, with a wife and children, the surest path of advancement was closed to him, but he was treated as the Pope's confidential adviser, and had been among the three hundred who received knighthood at the time of the Imperial coronation. "Commend me to the Holy Father, and take care that his goodwill towards me is increased rather than diminished. I, meanwhile, will do the same for you with the Emperor, with all diligence."² So wrote Æneas to his faithful friend, and Piero doubtless did his best. But Nicholas v was not to be moved. He carried his prejudice so far as to determine that Æneas should not be a Cardinal, and as long as he lived the red hat hovered elusively upon our hero's horizon.

In the meantime, events in Germany were providing the would-be Cardinal with sufficient occupation. Five

¹ Æneas to Goro Lolli, 1 July 1453 (Weiss, Ep. 48).

² *Opera*, Ep. 148, 18 Sept. 1453.

months after his coronation the Emperor was besieged in his own palace at Neustadt by the rebellious Austrians, and forced to buy their withdrawal by handing over Ladislas to their charge. A determined effort to free Ladislas from his cousin's wardship was now in process, and a joint embassy from Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary had already gone to Rome in order to protest against the Pope's interference on Frederick's behalf.¹ Nicholas, however, remained faithful to his ally, and met the complaints of the three nations by an admonition to obey the Emperor on pain of excommunication. In the hands of an active Emperor, the Papal pronouncement might have proved an effective instrument, but under existing circumstances it was simply disregarded. The University of Vienna appealed from Nicholas v to a better instructed Pope, and the Austrians gathered round Neustadt with the intention of carrying their point by force of arms.

Æneas did his best to steer his Imperial master through this tangle of difficulties. He realised that Ladislas could not be kept in tutelage indefinitely, and that, in the absence of any military preparations, it was impossible for Neustadt to withstand a siege. Therefore he urged the Emperor to avoid the indignity of a defeat by doing at once what must be done sooner or later, and declaring his wardship of Ladislas at an end.² But less prudent counsels prevailed, and the siege was continued until the Austrians bombarded the gates of Neustadt from the vantage-ground of an adjacent mill, and so brought Frederick to his knees. Ladislas was handed over to the Count of Cilly without further negotiation, and the question of his future was left to be decided at the approaching Diet of Vienna. Thither, in December 1452, went Æneas, as the chief representative of the Emperor. His clever speech, *Adversus*

¹ Frederick had obtained the Pope's promise of support against the Austrians while he was in Rome, but unfortunately he had disregarded Nicholas v's warning. Cf. *Hist. Frid. III*, p. 287: "Tu cave, ne dum spiritualia quaeris arma, materialia negligas."

² *Hist. Frid. III*, pp. 377-8.

Austriales,¹ put the case for both Pope and Emperor with irresistible logic ; but his eloquence was as powerless as the Papal censures to counteract the fundamental weakness of Frederick's position. The Austrians realised that there was nothing to prevent them from doing as they pleased, and they refused to sign the terms drawn up by the Diet of Vienna. Until his death, in 1457, Ladislas was separated from his former guardian, and Frederick lost such control as he possessed over Austria, Bohemia, and Hungary.

To Æneas the Diet of Vienna, and everything connected with it, seemed a pitiable exhibition of Imperial weakness. He describes, in the language of outraged decorum, how Albert of Brandenburg left Vienna and bearded Frederick at Neustadt in order to demand a personal hearing for his case against the city of Nürnberg. Æneas was doing business with the Emperor when this unmannerly gentleman burst into the room and declared loudly that he cared nought for Pope or Emperor, but that he, a prince of noble blood, would not be judged by marshals and chamberlains. " This is a common failing in princes," remarks the courteous Italian ; " they are brought up among inferiors who praise all that they say, and when they mix with strangers and equals they storm and lose their temper if they are crossed." ² The majority of the princes followed hard upon Brandenburg's heels to Neustadt, and Frederick, who had stayed at home to avoid the Diet, found it established in his own palace. It needed all Æneas's statecraft to prevent the Emperor from being forced into an unjust pronouncement, under the menace of Brandenburg's anger. With this prince, as with the Austrians, might was right ; he had no respect for Imperial authority or for the decisions of the Diet. And the year 1453 had already dawned ; in a few months the capture of Constantinople would fling out a challenge to the nations of Europe to unite in defence of Christendom against the Turk. As

¹ Mansi, *Pius II Orationes*, vol. i. p. 184.

² *Hist. Frid. III*, p. 417.

far as Germany was concerned, none knew better than Æneas how faint was the prospect of an effective response to the call.

The news of the fall of Constantinople reached the Imperial Court at Gr̃az. Even the phlegmatic Emperor was moved to tears, and to Æneas the disaster was quite overwhelming. As a statesman, the establishment of the Turkish power at Constantinople made him tremble for the fate of Europe, torn by national and civil strife. "Mahomet now reigns among us," he wrote; "already the Turkish sword is hanging over our head. The Black Sea is closed to us . . . the Wallachians must obey the infidel; soon the Hungarians and the Germans will share their fate."¹ As an ecclesiastic, he felt that the whole Catholic Church had suffered disgrace. He thought mournfully of S. Sophia, and of the other famous Basilicas of Constantinople, which were either in ruins or polluted by infidel rites. It seemed to him that the Eastern Church had received a blow from which she could never recover. "Of the two lights of Christendom, one has been put out." Above all, as a humanist he grieved for the loss of the priceless manuscripts which must inevitably accompany the destruction of the centre of Grecian civilisation. "What can I say of the countless books, which are as yet unknown to the Latin world?" he wrote to that other sorrowing scholar, Pope Nicholas v. "Alas! how many names of famous men will perish. It is a second death to Homer and to Plato. Where shall we find our poets and our philosophers? The fount of the Muses is stopped."² In the face of so great a calamity the only refuge lay in prompt action. All his powers of persuasion were thrown into the passionate appeal to Nicholas v to take up his burden, and to rally the forces of Europe for a Crusade against the Turk. "It is for you, Holy Father, to arise, to address kings, to send legates, to exhort princes. . . . Now, while

¹ Æneas to Pope Nicholas v, 12 July 1453 (*Opera*, Ep. 162).

² *Op. cit.*

the evil is recent, let Christian States hasten to take counsel, to make peace with their co-religionists, and to move with united forces against the enemies of the saving Cross." It must be allowed that Æneas lived up to his precepts nobly. For the two years that he remained in Germany he wrote letters and attended Diets with untiring vigour, and, during the eleven years of life that were still left to him, the suffering East was seldom absent from his thoughts. The fall of Constantinople, a crisis in the history of Europe, was also a turning-point in Æneas's career. From that day forward he never ceased to work for the crusading cause, and death cut him off in the midst of his labours.

The months which followed the fall of Constantinople were full of disappointment for those who had fixed their hopes upon a Crusade. At first there seemed a fair prospect of something being done. Nicholas v felt that the honour of the Papacy was at stake, and was eager to wipe out the disgrace. By a Bull of 30 September 1453 he solemnly published a Crusade, and called on all Christian princes to take part in the holy war.¹ The Emperor summoned a European Congress to meet at Regensburg in the spring of 1454, and this, with the preaching of Fra Giovanni Capistrano, and the appearance of the Bishop of Pavia as a special legate for the furtherance of the Crusade in Germany, created a respectable appearance of activity. But the first flicker of enthusiasm died away almost as soon as it arose. The Emperor's zeal was not sufficient to overcome his habitual repugnance to Diets, and he seized on the excuse of some local disturbance in Styria to announce his inability to attend the Congress. "He decided, after the manner of men, to attend to his own affairs in person, and to depute public business to the care of others,"² writes the indignant Æneas, after vainly endeavouring to rouse Frederick to a sense of his duty. Meanwhile Nicholas v was a prey to misgivings of a similar

¹ Raynaldus, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, 1453, Nos. 9-12.

² *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 22.



THE SULTAN MAHOMET II

PORTRAIT BY GENTILE BELLINI

Layard Collection, Venice

kind. To him the Congress of Regensburg was a General Council in embryo, therefore he refused to join with Frederick in summoning the princes of Europe to attend; and beyond sending his legate, he did nothing to promote its success. When Pope and Emperor refused to subordinate their selfish fears to the welfare of Christendom, little could be expected from men of lesser degree. Æneas had a specimen of the ardour of German princes when he halted on his way to Regensburg in order to invite Louis of Bavaria to act as one of the Emperor's representatives at the Congress. The Duke of Bavaria was a tall, handsome young man of twenty-eight, ready of speech, and most pleasant in manner—a perfect prince, in Æneas's opinion, if only he had known Latin. He might have added, "if he had possessed more of the crusading spirit." Louis replied to the Emperor's request with a courteous refusal; and although he promised to send representatives, it was clear that he did not contemplate attending the Congress in person. "Meanwhile, outside the castle, innumerable dogs were barking, horses were chafing, and loud voices were heard swearing at the delay, and cursing the Imperial envoys for spoiling the day's hunting."¹ The Duke invited Æneas to join him, and on being refused, he mounted his horse, and, "surrounded by a joyous and youthful throng," was soon lost to sight in the forest.

The Congress of Regensburg was saved from abject failure by the inspiring presence of the Duke of Burgundy. This splendid prince, whom Æneas had seen in the prime of his manhood, twenty years before, at the Congress of Arras, was still strong and vigorous for all his sixty years, and he had sworn, with solemn rites, that he would never rest until the Turk was driven out of Europe. "One prince," wrote Æneas, "seems to me, above all others, worthy of praise—Philip, Duke of Burgundy, who when he was bidden to a Congress summoned for the salvation

¹ Æneas Silvius, *Historia de Ratisponensi Dieta* (Mansi, *Pius II Orationes*, vol. iii. pp. 1-85).

of Christian peoples, refused to desert the common cause by sending an excuse.”¹ Philip’s father, John the Fearless, had been taken prisoner by the Turk at the disastrous battle of Nicopolis, and the present Duke felt himself bound to the Crusade by filial piety as well as by the chivalrous traditions of a long line of ancestors. His coming put life into the proceedings at Regensburg. Louis of Bavaria left his hunting, and other princes were shamed into attendance, or at least into sending envoys. Matters progressed so far, that a definite scheme for raising an army was drawn up by the Imperial representatives, and received the approval of the Assembly.² But the letter which Æneas wrote to a friend in Italy, soon after the close of the Congress, shows that he, at any rate, was under no illusions as to the value of what had been effected.³ “If the Congress is large, you say, there is good hope of a successful issue. Is that what you think? For my part I prefer to be silent, and I could wish that my opinion were false and untrustworthy rather than that of a true prophet. My wishes differ from my hopes. I cannot persuade myself of any good result. . . . Christendom has no head whom all will obey. Neither Pope nor Emperor receives what is his due; there is no reverence, and no obedience; we look on Pope and Emperor only as names in a story or heads in a picture. Every city has its own king; there are as many princes as there are houses: how will you persuade this multitude of rulers to take up arms?” “Pride, sloth, avarice,” he wrote a few months later, “these are three most malignant plagues which have caused our religion to fall before the sword of the Turk. If we were humble, active, and generous, we could easily collect an army which would crush, not the Turk only, but all unbelievers. But no one will curb his ambitions, or submit to the will of others. We all suffer

¹ Æneas to Leonardo Benvoglianti, 5 July 1454 (*Opera*, Ep. 127).

² *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 23: “in verba Aeneae decretum factum est.”

³ *Loc. cit.*, *Opera*, Ep. 127.

from the disease of Jason, who bore it ill if he did not rule, because he had never learned to be ruled.”¹

These gloomy prognostications were justified by the proceedings at Frankfort, where the Diet met in the autumn of 1454, in order to discuss the Regensburg proposals. The temper of the German princes had changed in the interval, and now not a voice was raised in favour of the Crusade. The members of the Diet, Æneas tells us, “spoke evil of Pope and Emperor, insulted their envoys, and mocked at the Burgundians.” It was even said that the Crusade was a mere device for obtaining money, and the pitiful appeals of the Hungarians for aid were met with the taunt that, as they could not defend their country themselves, they were trying to involve Germany in their own downfall.² Æneas did his best to bring the princes to a better frame of mind. In a speech of two hours’ duration, which was listened to, he assures us, with the closest attention,³ he prevailed upon the Diet to renew the Regensburg decrees. Fra Giovanni Capistrano, who was in Frankfort at the time, could not say too much in his praise. “Both by his admirable oration and his excellent advice, he has conducted himself at this Diet with unexampled prudence and ability.”⁴ But the princes were in a dangerous mood. The deliberations upon the Crusade gave them an opportunity for raising the whole question of reform of the Empire, and they determined not to vote supplies for the war until their own grievances had been dealt with. In order that Frederick should have no means of escape, it was decided that the next Diet should be held at Neustadt. Here, in February 1455, the forces gathered, yet a third time, for the fray. “I am very much

¹ Æneas Silvius to Fra Giovanni Capistrano, Jan. 1455 (*Opera*, Ep. 405, p. 947).

² *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 23.

³ *Loc. cit.* Æneas’s own way of expressing this is realistic: “Oravit ille duabus ferme horis, ita intentis animis auditus, ut nemo unquam expuerit.”

⁴ Giovanni Capistrano to Pope Nicholas v, 28 Oct. 1454 (Wadding, *Annales Minorum*, Rome, 1735, vol. xii. p. 203).

afraid that the building which we erected at Frankfort will be destroyed," wrote Æneas to Capistrano.¹ It was, in fact, all ready to crumble about the ears of the luckless Emperor, who was faced with the alternative of making abject submission to the princes on the question of reform, or of rendering himself ridiculous in the eyes of Europe, through the refusal of the Diet to grant supplies.

In the midst of the proceedings at Neustadt, the death of Pope Nicholas v (24 March 1455) offered an unexpected way of escape from the dilemma. All parties hailed the sad event as an excuse for delay, and after agreeing that the levy of the crusading army should be postponed for a year, the members of the Diet went their several ways. "At the Diet of Neustadt," wrote the despairing Hungarians, "all that has been achieved, besides loss of precious time and disappointment of high hopes, is that, to the joy of our enemies, nothing has been done."² These fruitless assemblies had taught them that they had nothing to expect from Germany, and that the brunt of the Turkish war must be borne by them alone. In the following year they were reinforced by a motley crowd of Crusaders under Capistrano's leadership, which shared with them in the one striking success of the Christian forces, the relief of Belgrad (21 July 1456). But the hero of the day was the gallant Hungarian soldier Hunyadi, whose brilliant generalship and self-sacrificing devotion kept the Turk at bay, while Europe looked on, inactive and indifferent.

And what of Æneas's feelings as he contemplated the shattered ruin of a noble scheme, the sole result of his labours for the past two years? Sad, weary, and disappointed, he realised, perhaps for the first time, the limitations of that "goddess of persuasion" in whom he put his trust. Eloquence had failed to kindle the imagination of Europe, to counteract the weakness of the Imperial

¹ *Opera*, Ep. 405, p. 948.

² Letter of the Hungarian leaders to Calixtus III, 21 July 1455 (Wadding, vol. xii. p. 254).

power, or to render German Diets effective. In spite of his letters and speeches, in spite of his passionate enthusiasm, he was obliged to endorse the verdict of the Hungarians that nothing had been done.

The death of Nicholas v and the election of his successor made it necessary for Frederick to send an embassy to Rome in order to renew the obedience of Germany. Æneas and his friend Johann Hinderbach were the chosen envoys, and in May 1455 they set out on their journey. As far as Æneas was concerned the visit to Italy would be, in any case, of some months' duration, for he intended to take his long-postponed holiday in Siena as soon as he had finished the Emperor's business. His plans for the future depended upon the new regime in Rome, concerning which he was, as yet, very much in the dark. Nicholas v, although he withheld the Cardinal's hat, belonged to Æneas's own circle; the two had friends and interests in common, and as long as he reigned in Rome, Æneas knew that he could not be entirely forgotten. On the other hand, the old Spaniard, Alfonso Borgia, who was now Pope Calixtus III, was an entirely unknown quantity. There was the fear that Æneas might lose such influence as he possessed in the Curia, yet there was also the hope that Calixtus might prove kinder than Nicholas, and that Æneas's admission to the College of Cardinals might absolve him from the necessity of returning to Germany. In spite of the friction between them, Æneas had a sincere admiration for Nicholas v, and his verdict upon the dead Pope is written with true appreciation of the masterful, hot-tempered, highly cultivated scholar. After speaking of Nicholas's wonderful memory, profound learning, and generous patronage of art and letters, he adds: "He was quick to anger, but soon repented. His care for the sick and needy was unfailing. He was truthful in speech, and could not tolerate lies and inaccuracies. He trusted in himself too much, and never thought a thing well done unless he had done it. He loved choice books and fine clothes.

He was staunch to his friends, although there was not one of them who did not occasionally experience his anger. He could forgive an injury but he never forgot it.”¹ “His buildings show the vastness of his soul, for no one built more splendidly, more lavishly, or more rapidly than he.”² Such was the final tribute of one humanist to another. Sorrow for the loss of a true man of letters and mingled hope and misgiving with regard to his own future were the prevailing sentiments in Æneas’s mind, as he crossed the Alps for the last time.

Rome, in the summer of 1455, was a changed place since Æneas had last visited it. Piero da Noceto had lost his post at the Vatican, being one of the many scholars who were thrown out of employment by the death of the humanist Pope. For artists, architects, collectors, translators, and men of letters of every kind, the golden age of prosperity had vanished. The new Pope cared nothing for the arts; he was simple in his habits and rarely left his own room; all the strength and energy that remained to him were devoted to the two great objects of his heart’s desire, the promotion of the Borgia family and the prosecution of the war against the Turk. “The matter is very dear to our Holy Lord,”³ wrote Æneas, on the subject of the Crusade. “He thinks of nothing else night and day save by what means the Turk can be defeated. Both in private and public he declares his firm belief that he will not die until Constantinople is recovered.” Calixtus had small faith in Congresses, but preaching friars were sent through the length and breadth of Europe, selling indulgences, collecting tithes, and enlisting recruits for the crusading army. Meanwhile his own efforts were directed towards the production of an adequate Papal fleet. The treasures of Nicholas v’s collection, the gorgeous bindings of the books in the Vatican Library, even the golden salt-cellar from the Pope’s dinner-table, were all sacrificed to the

¹ Fea, p. 109.

² *Hist. Frid. III*, p. 138.

³ Cugnoni, Ep. 58, pp. 121 *seq.*

same end, and in a year's time a fleet of sixteen vessels set sail for the East, a creditable witness to Calixtus III's self-sacrificing zeal.

Common enthusiasm for the Crusade at once created a strong bond of union between Æneas and the Pope, and our hero's own reception left nothing to be desired. But on the question of German obedience Calixtus proved the reverse of conciliatory. "On the evening of our arrival," Æneas wrote to the Emperor, "we sent to our Holy Lord, saying that we wished to speak to him in secret before the public audience. He replied that he would be glad to hear us, but that we must beware of trying to make conditions with regard to the obedience, as under no circumstances would he accept a conditional obedience. The message seemed hard to us, but we went to His Holiness on the following day and expounded to him your Majesty's honourable intentions, and then, with all possible modesty, we brought forward your requests."¹ But the Papacy had grown stronger since the day when Æneas first proffered the obedience of Germany to the dying Eugenius, while the power of the Emperor had waned, and no amount of tact could readjust the balance between them. The Imperial alliance was no longer of vital importance to the Pope; therefore he declined to buy it by concessions, and Æneas ended by renewing the obedience without further reference to the conditions which Frederick had hoped to impose.

Meanwhile Æneas heard himself spoken of in Rome as likely to be made a Cardinal in Advent. When the time came for the publication of Calixtus III's first creations a rumour went out from the Vatican that both the Bishop of Siena and the Bishop of Zamora were among the new Cardinals. Æneas was suffering from a sharp attack of gout, and his friends hurried to his bedside with the good news; but he prudently declined to indulge in any demon-

¹ Æneas Silvius and Johann Hinderbach to Frederick III, Rome, 8 Sept. 1455 (Cugnioni, *Æneae Silvii Opera Inedita*, pp. 122-6).

strations of joy until the rumour was confirmed. "Yet so varied is the nature of man that some easily believe what they desire"; the Bishop of Zamora at once accepted the news as true. "Now at last I obtain what I have coveted for the past thirty-nine years," he cried, and hurried to his favourite church to return thanks.¹ But when the result of the Consistory was made known there were only three new Cardinals, and neither Æneas nor Zamora was among them. It was a bitter disappointment, but Æneas took consolation from the thought that he had been spared from making himself ridiculous, and waited with what patience he could muster for a future creation. He employed his time, during the interval, in a visit to the Court of Naples, where his influence prevailed upon King Alfonso to make peace between the *condottiere*, Jacopo Piccinino, and the Republic of Siena. At first Alfonso had refused to listen to the entreaties of the Sienese, but on Æneas's arrival all was changed.² The Neapolitan king was a man of culture and a generous patron; he had made friends with Æneas over the Emperor's marriage negotiations six years before, and he welcomed him back to Naples with real pleasure. "Now we will gladly speak of peace," he said, "for a mediator has arrived whom we love."³ Æneas was thoroughly in his element at the Neapolitan Court, in the cultivated society of scholars and artists which circled round the great Alfonso. Among the chief literary lights was Antonio Beccadelli, Il Panormita, whom Æneas had known in University days at Siena, and who was now collecting the literary materials for Alfonso's career. Æneas spent his leisure moments in compiling four books of anecdotes and epigrams to add to his friend's collection.⁴ He also visited the sights of the neighbourhood—Baia, Cumae, Salerno, Amalfi—and showed his accustomed zest

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. pp. 25-6.

² Cf. Malavolti, p. 54.

³ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 27.

⁴ Æneas Silvius, *In Libros Antonii Panormitæ poetæ, de dictis et factis Alphonsi regis memorabilibus Commentarius* (*Opera*, pp. 472-97).

in hunting out everything of interest, from classical remains to relics of the Apostles.¹ Thus the days passed pleasantly enough, and he left Naples, feeling that he had discovered in Alfonso the humanist's ideal of what a prince should be. He even congratulated himself—so well did Alfonso understand the art of dissimulation—on having secured a distinguished recruit for the Crusade. On returning to Rome he was again greeted with the news that he was about to be made a Cardinal. This time there was no mistake, and on 18 December 1456 Æneas entered the Sacred College as Cardinal Priest of Santa Sabina.

The two short years of his Cardinalate were probably among the happiest in Æneas's life. After hard work and many disappointments, he had at last achieved his ambition, and as he contemplated the life of cultivated ease and pleasant companionship which opened out to him in Rome, he felt as if he had left struggles and difficulties for ever behind him. His triumph was made sweeter by the knowledge that it had been won in the face of strenuous opposition. The members of the Sacred College feared that more scions of the Borgia family would be added to their numbers, and they protested to the last against any fresh creations. "No Cardinals ever entered the College with greater difficulty than we; for rust had so corroded the hinges that the door would not open."² So wrote Æneas, in a spirit of entire satisfaction, to a fellow-recipient of the red hat, the Bishop of Pavia. To Nicholas of Cusa, already a Cardinal of some years' standing, he wrote begging him to leave his German bishopric in order to act as mentor and guide to his new colleague.³ "Rome is the only country for Cardinals," he exclaimed, rejoicing at the thought that he need never leave Italy again. "Even if a man were born in the Indies, he would have either to

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 27.

² Æneas Silvius to the Cardinal of Pavia (*Opera*, Ep. 195, p. 765), 26 Dec. 1456.

³ Æneas Silvius to Cardinal Cusa (*Opera*, Ep. 197, p. 765), 27 Dec. 1456.

refuse the hat, or to seek Rome, the home and mother of us all."

Nevertheless, it was not in Æneas's nature to rest upon his laurels, and he had not been long a Cardinal before he found new objects to strive for, and fresh spurs to his ambition. In the first place, the new Cardinal found himself decidedly short of money. "Poor I was born, and poor I have remained; my honour has increased, but not so my riches."¹ The bishopric of Siena, he had long complained, was "as unfruitful as an elm tree,"² and what with the disturbed state of the country, and the constant litigation arising out of the affairs of the see, his Vicar had hard work to make both ends meet. Æneas also suffered from being the most prosperous member of a large and needy family. His tastes were simple and books his only luxury, but he soon realised that he must add to his income, if he were to maintain himself with suitable dignity and satisfy the hungry crowd of poor relations who were for ever at his doors. Thereupon began a zealous hunt for vacant benefices which was conducted by means of his many friends in Germany. "When anything falls vacant in your country that you think we could obtain, pray inform us of it,"³ Æneas wrote to Heinrich Senftleben, one of the Imperial secretaries. Again, on the following day to another friend: "When you hear that any monastery or good canonry is vacant, let us know quickly."⁴ On the death of the Bishop of Ermland, in 1457, he was elected as his successor by a section of the Chapter, but in spite of the Pope's support, he was never able to obtain possession of the see; nevertheless, the citizens of the remote Baltic port are still proud to reckon Æneas Silvius among their Bishops.⁵ Disappointments of this kind were of common occurrence, but Æneas himself confesses to deriving an

¹ *Opera*, Ep. 352, p. 830.

² Æneas to the Cardinal of Fermo, 22 Jan. 1454 (Weiss, Ep. 130; Voigt, Ep. 348).

³ *Opera*, Ep. 272, p. 793.

⁴ *Opera*, Ep. 273, p. 794.

⁵ Cf. Voigt, vol. ii. pp. 223-32, for a detailed account of the episode.

income of two thousand ducats from the German Church, only a fair reward, in his own opinion, for long service in Germany.¹ Yet he did not wish to exceed the limits of propriety or to appear unduly grasping. "It does not please us that another benefice should have been taken in our name in so short a time," he wrote to an over-zealous friend; "we are most anxious not to displease this nation, but we are driven by necessity, for we must maintain a fitting position."²

Far more than riches, Æneas coveted an influential position in the Curia. A Cardinal who was not a Papal favourite, a member of a powerful Roman family, or the representative of some foreign power, tended to sink into obscurity, and this was a prospect which our hero could not even contemplate. Here again, his connection with Germany served him in good stead, and he lost no opportunity of asserting his claim to represent the Empire in Rome. More valuable still was his native talent for adapting himself to new surroundings, establishing easy relations with his colleagues, proving his worth, and making friends. Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia, the Pope's ambitious nephew, found in Æneas an agreeable companion, who did not judge his youthful follies too harshly, and who was always ready to do him a service. On the other hand, Cardinal Orsini, who headed a rival faction in the College, lived on equally good terms with him. Towards his inferiors he was affable and easy of access; his equals he treated with just sufficient deference to gratify their vanity. His tact, courtesy, and cheerfulness were unfailing. It is easy to understand that, while possessing few outward advantages, Cardinal Piccolomini soon came to occupy a unique position in the Curia, and that, as the advancing years of Calixtus III turned all thoughts towards another Papal election, Æneas should be thought of as a possible candidate for the throne of S. Peter.

Æneas's claim to be the chief representative of the

¹ *Opera*, Ep. 356. Cf. also Martin Mayr to Æneas, *Opera*, p. 1035.

² *Opera*, Ep. 321, Æneas to Johann Tolner, 4 Nov. 1457.

Empire among the Cardinals was not allowed to pass unchallenged. The Cardinal of Pavia considered that he had a right to the position, on the strength of his somewhat inglorious legatine mission to Germany for the promotion of the Crusade, and he was constantly interfering in German affairs, in a way that Æneas regarded as wholly unwarrantable. The latter was especially tenacious of his privileges where King Ladislas was concerned, and when Pavia carried his interference into this quarter it was a case of open warfare. "We beg you to see to it that when His Holiness and the Cardinals are addressed on Hungarian affairs, we are made to appear greatly beloved by the King, as indeed we are; for there are certain persons here who wish to supplant us, as if they were more 'royal' than we . . . and it would be unjust if new-comers were allowed to usurp our position."¹ So wrote Æneas to a Hungarian friend, when he had reason to fear the activity of his rival. Every incident in ecclesiastical politics was turned to the purposes of this unseemly feud: if Æneas supported one candidate for a vacant bishopric, Pavia promptly supported another, generally to find himself worsted by one whose experience of German affairs was greatly superior to his own. Æneas had too intimate a knowledge of Germany to make the struggle equal, but, in spite of the satisfaction which he derived from his rival's discomfiture, he was conscious of the brevity of royal memories, and his letters show that he had a nervous fear of being supplanted and forgotten. When a new Papal envoy, Lorenzo Rovarella, was sent to effect a reconciliation between the Emperor and Ladislas, Æneas wrote anxiously to Senftleben: "The man burns with an incredible desire to appear German and the arbiter of Germany, but if the King is wise he will continue to make use of one with whom he has eaten a bushel of salt."² In this frame of mind nothing could be more welcome to him than the fresh difficulties which arose between

¹ *Opera*, Ep. 246, p. 782, To Nicolao Listio, 10 March 1457.

² *Opera*, Ep. 311, p. 811, 2 Nov. 1457.

the Papacy and the German Church. Directly the friction became serious, he, with his long experience as a mediator, was the one person who could be of use: Cardinal Piccolomini was as active and as important as he wished to be.

The trouble arose in 1456, when the German princes began to make sporadic efforts after reform, their zeal taking the usual shape of a combined attack upon Pope and Emperor. At one moment both Frederick and Calixtus were in danger of deposition, and the threat of a Pragmatic Sanction for Germany was brandished, sword-like, over the Pope's head. But, as usual, the Diets from which great deeds were expected, achieved little but empty words, and when Æneas was drawn into the struggle, matters had already reached the stage at which individual reformers were willing to be bribed into abandoning their revolutionary designs. In August 1457, Martin Mayr, the Chancellor of the Archbishop of Mainz, wrote to congratulate Æneas on his Cardinalate, and he made this friendly letter the vehicle for a detailed indictment of the Pope's dealings with the German Church.¹ The ruthless disregard of the principle of free capitular election, the shameless sale of benefices, the use of reservation as a means of enriching members of the Curia, these and numerous other forms of Papal extortion were the burden of Mayr's complaint. The grievances were genuine enough, but Æneas read between the lines of the letter, and realised that its true purport was to show that the Archbishop of Mainz, hitherto the leader of the reforming party, was prepared to enter upon separate negotiations with the Pope. With skill born of experience, he at once took the necessary steps to complete the process of dissolution. In his answer to Mayr² he assured him of the Pope's readiness to redress any grievances which the Electors would point out, and the Archbishop of Mainz promptly acted upon the suggestion, sending an envoy to Rome in the following month who

¹ Martin Mayr to Æneas Silvius, *Opera*, p. 1035.

² *Opera*, Ep. 369.

was able to effect an understanding between Calixtus and his some-time opponent. Meanwhile Æneas wrote secret instructions to his many friends in Germany as to the part which it behoved them to play.¹ He supplied the Emperor with an appropriate defence of the Papal policy,² and he suggested to the Pope the exact degree of cordiality or severity which he should use towards the various dignitaries of the German Church.³ So well did he do his work that when the death of Ladislás in November 1457 turned the thoughts of Germany into another channel, this sad event gave the final blow to a movement that was already dead. The only permanent importance of the whole episode lies in the fact that it produced the *Germania*, that vivid picture of fifteenth-century Germany, one of the best and most characteristic of Æneas's literary works.

De ritu, situ, conditione et moribus Germaniae,⁴ to give it its full title, was an expansion of Æneas's original answer to Martin Mayr. It was an attempt to vindicate the Papal policy in Germany by showing the degree of power and prosperity to which the country had attained under the auspices of the Catholic Church. Thus it is frankly a political pamphlet, a forcible statement of one side of the question, containing much that is open to argument, and much that is exaggerated and over-coloured. Nevertheless, it surpasses all other descriptions of the day, because there was no one who knew Germany so intimately as Æneas, and who possessed, at the same time, the artist's vision and the artist's power of reproduction. Smiling cities and noble churches, fertile lands and broad rivers, the prosperity of the merchants, the power and wealth of the princes, both ecclesiastical and lay—all these are portrayed in the *Germania*, to the delight of generations

¹ Cf. *Opera*, Epp. 320, 331, 335, 337, etc.

² Calixtus III to Frederick III, 31 Aug. 1457 (written by Æneas in the Pope's name), *Opera*, Ep. 371, p. 840.

³ Cf. Voigt, vol. ii. p. 237.

⁴ *Opera*, pp. 1035–86.

of German patriots, who have forgotten, if they were ever aware of, the circumstances which led to its production.

The *Germania* is not alone among Æneas's writings at this period. Comparative leisure and access to good libraries gave him opportunities for literary work which he had not enjoyed before. During his brief career as Cardinal he was at work on his *History of Frederick III*, carrying it down to the death of King Ladislas. He also compiled the *Europa*, a preliminary collection of materials which he hoped to weave into a *Cosmographia*, or historical and geographical treatise upon all parts of the known world. Finally, in the summer of 1458, when he was staying at Viterbo, taking baths for his gout, he beguiled the time by writing a *History of Bohemia*, a country in which he had taken special interest since the days of his first encounter with the Hussites at Basel. He intended to offer the book to his friend King Alfonso, and he had already composed the dedication when he heard that the great patron of humanism had breathed his last (June 1458). A few weeks later his peaceful *villegiatura* was interrupted by the news of the death of Calixtus III (6 August). Cardinal Calandrini, Nicholas v's nephew, who had also been taking baths in the neighbourhood, came hurriedly to Viterbo, and he and Æneas set out together for Rome. Both Cardinals were considered possible candidates for the Papacy, and the Romans, who had set their hearts upon an Italian Pope, gave them a demonstrative welcome as they rode into the city. On 16 August, in the Vatican Palace, the Cardinals entered the Conclave.

CHAPTER VII

THE PAPAL ELECTION

AT the Papal election of 1458 the College of Cardinals numbered twenty-four members. Of these, Cardinals Carvajal and Scarampo were away on special missions, the one in Hungary, the other in charge of the Papal fleet; Nicholas of Cusa had remained faithful to his own diocese of Brixen, in spite of Æneas's efforts to entice him to Rome; the Bishop of Augsburg was one of those purely German ecclesiastics who never visited the Curia; and two Frenchmen, Cardinals Rolin and de Longueil, were also absent from the Conclave. Thus the choice of the new Pope lay with eighteen Cardinals, divided into various groups for national, political, or personal reasons, and divided also in their own minds as to whether they should press for the candidate whom they most desired, or direct their energies solely to opposing him whom they most disliked.

Perhaps the most prominent member of the College was Guillaume d'Estouteville, the powerful and wealthy Cardinal of Rouen. In his Church of S. Maria Maggiore the best music and the most eloquent preachers of the day were to be heard, and his magnificent palace was the centre of a brilliant and cultivated society. He had a faithful supporter in the Cardinal of Avignon, and of the possible candidates for the Papacy, he seemed, on the whole, the most likely to succeed. Among the Italian Cardinals, the Orsini and the Colonna each had their representative in the College. Genoa was represented by her Archbishop, Cardinal Fiesco, and Milan by Æneas's

bête noire, the Cardinal of Pavia, a member of the ancient family of Castiglione. Cardinals Barbo and Calandrini were nephews of former Popes, while old Cardinal Tebaldo was a protégé of Calixtus III, being the brother of his favourite physician. These, with Æneas—the Cardinal of Siena,—made up a body that was numerically strong, but which possessed little cohesion, and no very obvious head. Calixtus III had taken care that the Spanish contingent should be large. His two nephews, Borgia and de Mila, the Bishop of Zamora, and the Portuguese princeling, Don Jayme, were all his creations. There were also two Spaniards of older standing, Cardinal Cerdano, and the theologian, Torquemada. The converts from the Greek Church, Bessarion and Isidore of Russia, stood somewhat apart from the rest, their eyes fixed on the East, and only desirous of choosing a Pope who would place the Crusade against the Turk in the forefront of his policy.

Such was the motley company which gathered in the Vatican in the hot August weather, and it was difficult to predict upon whom the choice of the Conclave would fall. The situation was complicated by the fact that the one person whom all parties would have supported had died two days before. This was the learned and saintly Cardinal Domenico Capranica, who had given Æneas his start in life when he passed through Siena, twenty-seven years earlier, and whose timely decease left the way clear for his former secretary to ascend the throne of S. Peter. Many of the Italian Cardinals, confronted by the difficulty of agreeing upon another candidate, were inclined to give a reluctant assent to the election of Estouteville, but there were forces outside the College to be reckoned with. To Ferrante, the new King of Naples, struggling to hold his father's throne against rebel barons and Angevin claimants, it was of the utmost importance to prevent the choice of a Frenchman. A French Pope in Rome would create a centre of Angevin influence on the borders of the Neapolitan kingdom, and Ferrante was doing everything

in his power to avert so great a misfortune. He was aided by Francesco Sforza, who was keenly alive to the danger of French predominance in Italy. The measure of success which their diplomacy had achieved can be gathered from the report which the Milanese ambassador forwarded to his master on the eve of the Conclave: "Although God has shattered our designs by taking to Himself the most worthy Cardinal of Fermo (Capranica), I have called reason to my counsel in this great misfortune, and I hope, with God's help, to bring matters to a satisfactory conclusion. I am not without hope of Cardinal Colonna, but the Cardinal of Siena seems to me more probable, seeing that all parties are most inclined to agree upon his election, including the envoys of King Ferrante."¹

Before the Cardinals entered the Conclave, Domenico de' Domenichi, Bishop of Torcello, preached to the assembled College, taking as his text *Acts* i. 24, "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew of these two the one whom Thou hast chosen." Humanism had gained an entry even into the proceedings of a Papal election, and all the fire and eloquence of the new learning were thrown into the Bishop's appeal to his hearers to consider the gravity of their responsibility, and to choose a Pope who would deal worthily with the great problems which lay before him.² After the sermon the members of the Conclave spent the remainder of the day in settling in to their new quarters. Separate cells were provided for the Cardinals in a large hall of the Vatican, and there were corridors where they could meet or walk about.³ The actual business of election took place in the Chapel of S. Nicholas, where Fra Angelico's frescoes in their pristine glory smiled upon the assembly.

17 August was devoted to the business of drawing up the Capitulations, which each Cardinal swore to observe

¹ Otto de Carretto to the Duke of Milan, 14 Aug. 1458 (Pastor, vol. iii. Appendix I.).

² Pastor, vol. iii. p. 8.

³ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 30.

in the event of his becoming Pope. This attempt to bind the Pope in embryo, before endowing him with unlimited authority, dated, apparently, from the election of Boniface VIII.¹ The actual Capitulations varied on each occasion, and they had gained a new prominence from the conciliar movement, which raised the whole question of the nature of Papal authority and the place of the Cardinals in the Constitution of the Church. If the Capitulations of 1458 had been strictly observed, they would have transformed the Papacy from a monarchy into an oligarchy.² The Pope was pledged to prosecute the Crusade "according to the counsel of his brothers the Cardinals," and to undertake the reform of the Curia with their advice and help. He might not move the Curia without their consent, or make any ecclesiastical appointments, save to small and unimportant benefices. With regard to the government of the States of the Church, the consent of the Cardinals was declared necessary to the granting of fiefs, the declaration of war, and the imposition of fresh taxes. An article which was entirely new to the occasion required the Pope to make a monthly allowance of a hundred ducats to every Cardinal whose total income was under 4000 ducats. It is possible that this demand for the *Piatto Cardinalizio*,³ as it came to be called, was partly owing to the financial straits in which the Cardinal of Siena so frequently found himself. The weak point of the Capitulations lay, however, in the absence of any power to enforce them upon an autocratic Pope. It was decreed that the Cardinals should meet once a year to inquire into their due observance, and that, if they found that the Pope had failed in his duty, they should "admonish him in love" three times. Yet if the third admonition did not produce the desired effect, no other remedy was suggested, nor, indeed, was any remedy possible save an

¹ Cf. Pastor, vol. i. p. 283.

² Raynaldus, 1458 (*Pius II*, i.), Nos. 5-8 for text. Raynaldus, 1352, No. 25, gives the Capitulations of the year 1352.

³ Cf. Pastor, vol. iii. p. 11.

appeal to a General Council, which the Cardinals considered as dangerous and undesirable as did the Pope himself.

The preliminaries being accomplished, the real work of the Conclave began, and after Mass the next morning the first scrutiny was held.¹ A golden chalice was placed on the altar, and three Cardinals kept watch over it as the rest advanced, one by one, to drop in the paper on which they had recorded their vote. When the chalice was emptied, it was found that the Cardinals of Siena and Bologna had each five votes, while no one else had more than three. But the first scrutiny seldom represented more than a preliminary testing of opinion, and after the Cardinals had adjourned for breakfast, a series of conferences began among the various groups, which continued throughout the day. "The richest and most powerful members of the College," Æneas tells us, "summoned the others to their side, and solicited the Apostolic See for themselves or their friends. They entreated, they promised, they threatened, and some threw aside all modesty and did not blush to sound their own praises and set forward their own claims to the Papacy."² Foremost in these intrigues was the Cardinal of Rouen, who saw that both Æneas and Calandrini were dangerous rivals, and therefore directed his energies mainly towards undermining their position. "But most of all he feared Æneas, holding his silence to be far more formidable than the clamourings of the others."³ "What is there in this man," he urged, "that makes you consider him worthy of the Papacy? Will you give us a Pope who is poor and gouty? How can a poor man relieve the poverty of the Church, or one who is sick heal her diseases? He has but lately come from Germany. How can we tell that he will not transfer the Curia thither? And what does his learning signify? Would you set a poet on

¹ The account of the proceedings of the Conclave rests on the authority of Æneas. Cf. *Commentarii*, lib. i. pp. 30-2. The important passages omitted from the printed edition but contained in the original MSS. are given by Lesca, pp. 429-38, and by Cugnoni, pp. 784-9.

² Lesca, p. 429 (MS. of *Commentarii*, lib. i.).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 430.

S. Peter's throne, and allow the Church to be ruled by the precepts of heathen philosophy? As to Philip of Bologna (Calandrini), he is a thick-headed man who can neither rule by himself nor profit by the advice of others. I, on the other hand, am a Cardinal of senior standing; you know that I am not without wisdom or experience in ecclesiastical affairs. I have royal blood in my veins. I abound in friends and riches, and I am willing to use them in the cause of the Church. I am in possession of not a few benefices, and these I shall distribute among you on vacating them." ¹ So well did these tactics succeed that, when evening came, Estouteville could reckon with tolerable certainty on eleven votes. He only needed one more to obtain the requisite majority of two-thirds of the Conclave. "When it was seen that eleven had agreed, no one doubted that there would soon be a twelfth, for, once matters had advanced thus far, some one would certainly rise and say, 'I will make you Pope,' and so obtain favour." ² Such was Æneas's view of the situation, and the Cardinals retired to rest feeling that the election was practically decided.

In the middle of the night Æneas was roused from his slumbers by Cardinal Calandrini, who had come to give him some friendly advice. Now that Estouteville's election was assured, he urged his colleague to get up at once, and go and offer his vote, so as to escape the unpleasant consequences of being out of favour with the new Pope. "I know what it is like to have the Pope as an enemy," said the unfortunate Calandrini. "I experienced it under Calixtus, who never turned a friendly eye upon me, because I did not vote for him." But Æneas was fashioned after a different pattern, and Calandrini's timid proposals only roused his fighting instinct. "I reject your counsel, O Philip," he exclaimed; "no one shall persuade me to choose one whom I think unworthy to be the successor of S. Peter. . . . The Pope cannot kill me if I do not vote for him. 'But,' you say, 'he will not love you or succour

¹ Lesca, p. 430.

² *Ibid.*, p. 431.

you, and you will suffer poverty.' As to that, poor I have lived and poor I can die. I shall not be deprived of the Muses, who are kinder to those of slender fortune. Moreover, I cannot believe that God will suffer His Bride the Church to suffer ruin at the hands of Estouteville. . . . To-morrow will show a Pope chosen, not by men, but by God. You are a Christian; take care that you do not choose as Christ's Vicar him whom you know to be a limb of the devil." ¹

This outburst of vehemence was the first step in a determined effort on Æneas's part to rally the Italian Cardinals in defence of their nation, and to defeat the French conspiracy. As soon as day dawned he went to his friend Borgia, and asked him why he had been so short-sighted as to promise his vote to Rouen. "I consulted my own interests, and fell in with the majority," Borgia replied. "I have a written promise that I shall not lose the Vice-Chancellorship. If I do not vote for Rouen, others will elect him, and I shall be deprived of my office." "Foolish youth!" retorted Æneas. "You have your promise, but the Cardinal of Avignon will have the Chancery. What is promised to you is also promised to him, and can you doubt with whom faith will be kept?" ² Æneas next sought the Cardinal of Pavia, and adapting his argument to his hearer, appealed not so much to motives of self-interest as to patriotism and family pride. He reminded him that his revered uncle, Cardinal Branda Castiglione, had been active in restoring the Papacy to Rome at the time of the election of Martin v. Would the nephew undo the uncle's work and help to transfer the Papacy to France? Whoever else might waver, he had never doubted that Pavia would stand firm. He had been sadly deceived in his opinion of him. Overcome by these reproaches, Pavia explained amid tears and sighs that he had given his word to Estouteville, and could not go back upon it. "It has come to this, as far as I can see," replied Æneas,

¹ Lesca, pp. 431-2.

² *Ibid.*, p. 433.

with bracing frankness: "whatever course you take, you will be forced to play the traitor. It is for you to choose whether you will betray your Church and country, or the Cardinal of Rouen." ¹ At this point, Cardinal Barbo took up the task, and assembling the Italian Cardinals in the Archbishop of Genoa's cell, he besought them "to prove that they were men, to consider their mother the Church and unhappy Italy, and, putting aside their own rivalries, to choose an Italian Pope." Thereupon the others proposed Æneas as their candidate, and, in spite of his modest protests, it was decided to support him at the morrow's scrutiny.

The next day all met once more in the Chapel of S. Nicholas. Estouteville was one of the Cardinals in charge of the chalice, and as our hero advanced to record his vote, he whispered in his ear, "I commend myself to you, Æneas." "Do you commend yourself to a worm like me?" ² was the swift retort. When every one had voted, the papers were taken one by one from the chalice, and the names recorded on them read aloud.³ At the conclusion Estouteville announced that the Cardinal of Siena had eight votes, but Æneas had kept careful note of the names as they were read out, and he bade him count again. Estouteville was obliged to own himself mistaken—the Cardinal of Siena had nine votes. Only three extra votes were required to decide the election, and it was resolved to proceed by the method of accession in order to obviate the necessity of a fresh scrutiny. There followed a few moments of breathless silence. "All sat still in their places, with pale faces, as if rapt by the Holy Spirit. No one spoke, no one opened his mouth or moved any part of his body save his eyes, which rolled in every direction. Wonderful indeed was the silence and strange the appear-

¹ Lesca, pp. 433-5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 435.

³ Each Cardinal filled up his paper in the following form: "Ego Petrus (sive Joannes sive alio nomine fuerit) in Romanam Pontificem eligo *Aeneam Cardinalem senensem*" (*Commentarii*, p. 30).

ance of the men from whom proceeded neither voice nor movement.”¹ Suddenly Cardinal Borgia rose to his feet. “I accede to the Cardinal of Siena,” he said, and “his voice was like a sword in the heart of Rouen.”² But Æneas had enemies in the Conclave, and among them was Cardinal Torquemada, who had known him at Basel, and had not forgiven the part which he played there. At this point, Torquemada and Isidore of Russia tried to break off the proceedings by leaving the Chapel; but no one followed them, and seeing that their device had failed, they soon returned. As they did so old Cardinal Tebaldo rose. “I also accede to him of Siena,” he said; and the suspense became as acute as if they had felt the shock of an earthquake. At last Cardinal Colonna rose; but as he was about to speak, Estouteville and Bessarion seized him on either side and tried to drag him forcibly from the Conclave. Protesting and resisting, he cried out, “I too accede to the Cardinal of Siena, and make him Pope.” In a moment all opposition was at an end, and the Cardinals prostrated themselves at the feet of Æneas, the newly elected Pontiff.³

After the election had been confirmed Bessarion spoke in the name of the rival party, and assured Æneas that their only objection to him was on the ground of his physical infirmity. They felt that an active Pope was required in order to prosecute the war against the Turk. “But God’s will is our will. He who has chosen you will supply what is lacking in your feet, and pardon our ignorance.” “You think far better of us than we do of ourselves,” Æneas answered. “You confine our imperfections to our feet; we know that they extend further. We are conscious of innumerable failings which might have caused our rejection,

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 30.

² Lesca, p. 436 (MS. of *Commentarii*).

³ The nine Cardinals who voted for Æneas were Orsini, Calandrini, Barbo, Fiesco, and Castiglione of the Italians; De Mila, Don Jayme, Cerdano, and Zamora of the Spanish party. The two Greeks, the two Frenchmen, and Torquemada opposed him.

and we know of no merits that fit us for this high office. . . . We should not venture to accept the honour did we not know that the action of two-thirds of the Sacred College proceeds from the Holy Spirit, whom we must not disobey. We honour you, and those who acted with you ; if you thought us unworthy, you obeyed your conscience in refusing to vote for us. You will be all equally dear to us ; for we do not ascribe our election to this person or that, but to the whole College and to God Almighty, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift.”¹ Even at this crisis of his life, the inborn gift of appropriate speech did not desert him ; the Pontifical note rang out, clear and strong, in the first words that he uttered.

The Cardinals proceeded to vest Æneas with the white Papal tunic, and asked by what name he wished to be called. “ Pius,” he answered, without hesitation. It was not of the early Christian saint and martyr, Pope Pius I, that he was thinking, but of Pius Æneas, Vergil’s hero, a fitting sponsor for a humanist Pope. In this new name he signed the Capitulations: “ I, Pius II, promise and swear, by God’s help, to observe all and each of the above, as far as lies in my power, and as is consistent with the honour and integrity of the Apostolic See.”² Meanwhile the Cardinal’s servants rushed to the new Pope’s cell, and appropriated their customary booty in the shape of books, clothes, and money ; but of the last, remarks the owner dryly, they found very little.³ The Roman mob also suffered disappointment from the comparatively unprofitable results of the raid upon the Piccolomini palace ; some persons, however, contrived to mistake the cry “ Il Sanese ” for “ Il Genovese,” and plundered the palace of the wealthy Cardinal Fiesco instead. Directly he had had some food, Pius II went to S. Peter’s, and having been seated upon the high altar over the relics of the Apostles,

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 31.

² Raynaldus, 1458 (*Pius II*, i.), No. 8.

³ *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 31.

he was installed on the Papal throne to receive the adoration of the assembled multitude.

So the fiercely contested election was decided, and all patriotic Italians rejoiced at the result. "We were in grave danger of having a French Pope," wrote Antonio da Pistoia to the Duke of Milan, "and there were such intrigues between Rouen and Avignon that it seemed almost impossible that the Papacy should not fall to one of them. God be praised that it has remained in Italy!"¹ In Rome, the old people, who had witnessed several Papal elections, declared that they had never seen the city so carried away by enthusiasm. Ferrante of Naples, breathing a sigh of relief, hastened to send his heartfelt congratulations; Borso d'Este ordered a three-days' holiday in Ferrara to do honour to the occasion;² Siena was almost beside herself with pride and delight. The citizens of the fair Tuscan Republic had been keeping their August festival with terror in their hearts. King Alfonso's death, Francesco Tomasio informs us, had left their arch-enemy, Piccinino, "unoccupied by any war-like enterprise," and he had already threatened to expend his superfluous energies upon the luckless Sienese.³ The Magistrates were debating the advisability of buying off his attack, when all fears were turned to rejoicing by the news that their own Bishop had been elected Pope. Agostino Dati, the Secretary of the Republic, has left a graphic account of the scenes of wild festivity to which Siena abandoned herself.⁴ "Joy seized the hearts of the people directly the news was made known." Magistrates and private citizens, men and women, grown people and children, all rejoiced together, and every bell in Siena was set ringing. At night the whole city was illuminated, and the citizens feasted at public banquets with

¹ Antonio da Pistoia to Francesco Sforza, Rome, 21 Aug. 1458 (Pastor, vol. iii. Appendix 3).

² *Diario Ferrarese* (Muratori, xxiv. p. 202). Borso also instituted a special race for the *palio*, offering a piece of green damask as the prize.

³ Franciscus Thomasius, *Historia Senensis* (Muratori, xx. p. 56).

⁴ Agostino Dati, *Opera*, pp. 84-5 (Senis, 1503).



CORONATION OF PIUS II

ABOVE (LEFT) THE IMPERIAL EAGLE, (RIGHT) THE ARMS OF THE PEOPLE AND COMMUNE OF SIENA
BELOW, THE CITY OF SIENA

BOOK COVER OF THE BICCHERNA, 1460

State Archives, Siena

olive wreaths upon their heads. There was dancing in the Piazza and singing in the streets; "it was as if the golden age had returned." This first outburst of rejoicing was followed by festivities of a more formal kind, which continued without interruption until after Pius II's coronation. On that day, 3 September, a solemn service was held in the Duomo; the Magistrates of the Republic attended in state, and Agostino Dati delivered an oration in the Pope's honour. The ceremonies concluded with a wonderful representation of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, accompanied by music and recitations. In the final scene Our Lady of Siena appeared in glory, wearing her crown, while "devout voices commended her sweet city to Pope Pius."¹ Meanwhile a splendid embassy, consisting of eight members, and supported by over a hundred horsemen, made its way to Rome to bear the congratulations of the Republic to her illustrious son. Almost the sole dissident note, amid the general rejoicing, came from Florence. Here, hatred of Siena was a far stronger sentiment than love of Italy, and the Florentines could not bring themselves to rejoice over the honour which had befallen the rival Republic. "Æneas's election caused them much annoyance, and when passers-by greeted them in the streets, and invoked God's blessing upon them in the customary manner, they answered bitterly, 'He is occupied with the Sienese, and reserves all blessings for them.'"²

And what was Pius II feeling, while his name was on every lip, and his election was discussed through the length and breadth of Europe? To those who have attempted to understand the mystery of his character, it does not seem unnatural that, after all his wiles and struggles, he should be filled with an overpowering sense of misgiving at the thought of what lay before him. His was not an ignoble ambition; he coveted a high position, not for its own sake, but as a means to fuller activity. Now that the

¹ Agostino Dati, *Opera*, p. 85.

² Lesca, p. 438 (MS. of *Commentarii*, lib. i.).

Papacy was actually his, the artist soul of him shrank back in terror lest he should fail to fill the position worthily. Merely to be Pope did not satisfy him. Had he the capacity or the physical strength to be a great Pope? This was the question that perplexed his mind as his friends hung round him, surprised and troubled that he did not appear to share their happiness. "Those who rejoice over so exalted a position do not think of the toils and dangers," he said mournfully. "Now I must show to others all that I have so often demanded of them."¹

The situation which confronted the new Pope was enough to daunt the bravest spirit. The death of King Alfonso had upset the delicate equilibrium upon which the peace of Italy depended, and there were signs of trouble on all sides, both at home and abroad. Alfonso's illegitimate son, Ferrante, had indeed succeeded in establishing himself upon the Neapolitan throne, but his position was precarious in the extreme. Calixtus III had refused to recognise his accession, and, shortly before his death, had claimed Naples as a Papal fief, in the hope of bestowing the kingdom on his own nephew, Don Pedro Borgia. Charles VII of France was pressing the claims of his cousin, René of Anjou, and many of the Neapolitan barons were only awaiting the opportunity to rise in support of the Angevin cause. It was clear that Ferrante would not maintain his throne without a struggle, and when it came to fighting, what must be the attitude of the Pope? Pius was convinced that Ferrante's triumph would best serve the interests of the Papacy in Italy, and personal feeling for Alfonso's son also inclined him to this side. Yet to support the Aragonese claimant would be to effect a revolution in Papal policy, and he would do so at the risk of offending France—in the present condition of ecclesiastical politics, the chief power in Europe which it was necessary for the Pope to conciliate. German neutrality had long ceased to exist, but the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges

¹ Campano, *Pius II* (Muratori, vol. iii. pt. 2, p. 974).

still remained, a thorn in the flesh of the restored Papacy, and one which Pius could only hope to extract by exercising the utmost tact and diplomacy in his dealings with France. At the same time, the Neapolitan trouble reacted upon the States of the Church, and Piccinino invaded the Papal territories, seizing Assisi, Nocera, and Gualdo in Ferrante's name. Many of the Papal fortresses were in the hands of Catalan governors, appointed by Calixtus III, and Pius II was obliged to buy these men out, at a heavy price, in order to regain possession of the strongholds. The Castle of S. Angelo itself was occupied by Don Pedro Borgia until it was ransomed by the Cardinals for 20,000 ducats. Thus there was work enough for the Pope to do in restoring order in his own dominions; and, in the midst of his numerous lesser cares, the cry of the suffering East rang persistently in his ears. The Turks were advancing steadily into Europe; whatever else he might do or fail to do, the Crusade must occupy the first place in his policy.

Faced by so vast and tangled a problem, it is not surprising that Pius faltered. The noble and pathetic Encyclical, in which he announced his accession to the faithful throughout Europe, is not merely a literary production but a genuine expression of his feelings during these first anxious days. He has been called, he says, "we know not by what secret and dread decree," to the throne of S. Peter. "Conscious that we possessed neither the ability nor the strength of body to bear worthily so heavy a burden, we pondered long over what we ought to do. But we believe that the election of the Roman Pontiff proceeds, not from man, but from Divine inspiration, which may not be resisted; and we trust that He who, from the first foundation of the Church, has chosen the weak of this world to confound the strong, will endue us with His strength for the work of government. Thus, in the spirit of humility, desirous of acting rightly, and of serving rather than of commanding, we have bowed our necks to the yoke of

Apostolic servitude. . . . And we pray your devotion, earnestly to entreat Almighty God that He will strengthen us by His grace and direct our ways." ¹

On 3 September, Pius II was crowned in S. Peter's by Cardinal Colonna, and then rode in solemn procession to the Lateran, the way being adorned by flags and banners, painted for the occasion by Benozzo Gozzoli. Yet it was noticed that the Pope looked careworn and sad in the midst of his splendour, and his nerves were shaken by a riot among the excited Roman populace which imperilled his passage through the city. But at last all was safely over, and Pius II took up his residence that same night in the Vatican. Here, once more, energy of spirits triumphed over physical infirmity, and he threw himself into his great task with all his old fire and enthusiasm. No Pope worked harder than he, no one composed so many of his own Bulls or made so many speeches. Undaunted by physical pain, from which he was rarely free, he went gallantly on his way, and only an occasional biting of the lip, or half-smothered exclamation, betrayed something of what his efforts cost him. As to the issue of his labours, the times in which he lived offered no scope for a Gregory or an Innocent, and the warmest admirer of Pius II must agree with him in acknowledging that his imperfections were not confined to his feet. Yet if he fell short of actual greatness, it cannot be denied that he filled his high position worthily. During the six years of his Pontificate the throne of S. Peter was occupied by a man with an ideal before him, an ideal which he strove persistently to realise.

¹ Pius II dilectis filiis universitati studii Parisiensis, 5 Sept. 1458 (*Opera*, Ep. 384, p. 859).

CHAPTER VIII

THE CONGRESS OF MANTUA

“**A**MONG the many cares which now took possession of the Pope’s mind, none was greater than his desire to stir up Christian people against the Turks, and to wage war upon them.”¹ So wrote Pius II at the beginning of the second book of his *Commentaries*; and on the very day after his election he gave proof of his zeal by summoning the Cardinals to a conference upon the Eastern question. To the various envoys who visited him during the next few weeks, it was evident that the Turkish war occupied the first place in his thoughts. On 12 October he announced his intention of summoning a Congress of Christian powers to Mantua,² in order to make plans for a Crusade. Few of the Cardinals welcomed the idea of leaving their comfortable quarters in Rome for what would probably prove to be a prolonged sojourn in a strange city, and they were sceptical also as to the advantage to be gained by a gathering of the kind. But the Pope’s promptitude had taken them by surprise; for very shame they could only praise his zeal and agree to his proposals. The next day the Bull *Vocavit nos Pius*, summoning the Congress to Mantua on 1 June 1459, was read in a public consistory. It was dispatched forthwith to the rulers of Europe, great and small, accompanied by

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 33.

² Udine was also named as an alternative, but the Venetians feared for their commercial relations with the Turk, and refused to allow the Congress to be held in their territories. Cf. *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 42.

special letters urging that envoys worthy of the occasion might be chosen, and given full powers to negotiate upon matters relating to the Crusade.¹

In view of his German experiences, Pius II's fervent belief in the efficacy of a European Congress is not altogether easy to understand. Yet the many abortive Diets which he had attended had not quenched his humanist faith in persuasion, and he was besides profoundly convinced of the virtue of his own office. He took comfort from the thought that the Congress of Regensburg had not been actively supported by Nicholas V, and promised himself very different results when the Pope presided over the Congress in person, and devoted all his efforts to ensuring its success.

From this time forward, preparations for the Pope's departure occupied all thoughts in Rome. The citizens were much disturbed at the prospect of the removal of the Curia, and of the pecuniary loss which it would entail. It was rumoured that the Congress of Mantua was a mere pretext for transferring the Papacy to Siena, or even to Germany, and Pius received numerous petitions urging him to abandon the project. In order to lessen the general discontent, he appointed Nicholas of Cusa, who had just returned from Germany, Papal Vicar in Rome and the Patrimony during his absence. Certain of the Cardinals and other officials also remained behind, to carry on the traditions of the Curia and to prevent the Romans from feeling themselves deserted. Antonio Piccolomini had already replaced Don Pedro Borgia as Governor of S. Angelo, and the death of the latter, in December, further helped to smooth the way of departure. It gave Pius an opportunity of conciliating a powerful party in Rome by appointing Antonio Colonna Prefect in Borgia's stead.²

¹ Cf. Pastor, vol. iii. pp. 24-5. The Bull is given in *Epistolae*, ed. Mediol., Ep. 1.

² Cf. Pastor, vol. iii. p. 28, and Infessura, *Diario della città di Roma* (Muratori, iii. pt. 2, p. 1138).

The barons of the Campagna were summoned to the Pope's presence to take a special oath of good behaviour, and a treaty with Ferrante provided at least a temporary solution of the Neapolitan problem. Pius agreed to recognise Ferrante as *de facto* King of Naples, while Ferrante on his side promised to pay an annual tribute, and to recall Piccinino from the States of the Church.¹ Thus when the year 1459 dawned, Pius felt that he could leave Rome with a tolerably free mind. On 20 January he left the Vatican *en route* for Mantua.

The journey to Mantua is the first of those progresses through Italy which form so characteristic and attractive a feature of Pius II's reign. In summer and winter, cold and heat, the Papal cortège pursued its leisurely way. The record of these wanderings fills the pages of the *Commentaries*, where Pius recalls the vivid impressions of light and colour, city and landscape, scenes actually witnessed and scenes painted by historical association, which he received throughout the course of his pilgrimages. When the Pope left Rome on this occasion, winter reigned over the Campagna, and the crowds of weeping citizens, who accompanied him to the Ponte Molle, were too much for his easily roused emotions.² Yet in spite of the mournful surroundings, Pius was in buoyant spirits. He was profoundly impressed with the consciousness of his divine mission, and the prophets of evil, who foretold the total loss of the States of the Church during his absence, left him unmoved. "God, in whose cause we set forth, will deal with us more kindly," he replied to them. "And even if Divine mercy should permit the loss you fear, we would rather be deprived of our temporal possessions, which have been often lost and often recovered, than suffer injury to our spiritual power, which would be hard to restore if it were once weakened."³ The change of scene, the open-air life, the enthusiasm with which he was greeted everywhere, alike contributed to his

¹ Raynaldus, 1458, Nos. 30-49.

² *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 38.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

enjoyment. He felt that he was performing the clear duty of the Pope in a suitable and dignified manner, and therefore he was well content.

Pius passed the first night out of Rome as the guest of the Orsini at Campagnano. The next day he crossed the Tiber by a new wooden bridge, gay with ivy and evergreens, and proceeded up the valley into Umbria. All along the road crowds flocked to welcome him. Priests, bearing the Host, invoked God's blessing upon his enterprise. Boys and girls, with laurel crowns on their heads and olive branches in their hands, came out to wish him health and happiness. "They who could touch the fringe of his garments held themselves blessed."¹ The fair cities through which he passed—Narni, Terni, Spoleto, Foligno—all donned their festal array to do honour to the Head of Christendom. At Spoleto he had the pleasure of spending four days with his sister Caterina, and from thence he passed to Assisi, the city which is "ennobled by the blessed Francis . . . who deemed nothing richer than poverty."² He was lodged in the fortress which Piccinino had made over to the Papacy only a few days before, and he could not but marvel that "a soldier of fortune should yield so well fortified a place, and one so well adapted for disturbing the peace of Italy; he could only believe that it was the work of Divine mercy, which had put fear into Piccinino's heart lest the Congress of Mantua should be interrupted."³

From Assisi, Pius crossed the Tiber valley to Perugia, where he arrived on 1 February, the Vigil of the Feast of the Purification. The great Guelf city had not received a Papal visit for nearly seventy years,⁴ and she laid herself out to entertain her guest royally. "Although winter raged fiercely, the city was as gay as if spring had come."⁵

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 41.

² *Ibid.*, p. 42.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁴ Not since Boniface ix fled from Perugia in 1393 (Campano: Muratori, iii. pt. 2, p. 975). Cf. Heywood, *Perugia*, p. 279.

⁵ *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 42.

In the course of his three weeks' stay in Perugia, Pius consecrated the Church of S. Domenico and ordered "a window of exceptional greatness behind the high altar to be filled with glass."¹ The Dominican Church, with its vast window, is familiar to every visitor to Perugia, but few realise its connection with Pius II. Meanwhile the Pope was casting longing eyes in the direction of Siena. He desired nothing more than to see his "sweet country" again, but he felt himself debarred from visiting her, owing to the quarrel which had already arisen between himself and the Republic over the admission of the *Monte dei Gentiluomini* to political power. Siena, however, was as anxious to receive the Pope as he was to come, and the news that he was about to visit the hated Florence proved too much for her powers of resistance.² An embassy was dispatched to Perugia entreating the Pope to honour his native city by his presence, and expressing the desire of the Republic to meet his wishes with regard to the *Gentiluomini*. With a glad heart, Pius accepted the olive-branch and turned his steps into Tuscany. His way lay across Lake Trasimeno, which had lately been swept by storms, and presented an angry and forbidding appearance to the travellers. But when the Pope set foot on the vessel which was to carry him to the Tuscan shore, "suddenly, as if by Divine command, the waves were stilled, and the sea became as a beast that had been tamed."³ All that night and the following morning the calm continued, "and the inhabitants marvelled greatly that Trasimeno, which is stormy and intractable throughout the winter, should thus make itself navigable for the Pope's voyage."⁴ The next few weeks were spent at Siena and Corsignano, where many happy meetings took place, and many old ties were renewed.⁵ So pleasantly did the days pass that it was not

¹ Campano (Muratori, iii. pt. 2, p. 975).

² Franciscus Thomasius, *Historia Senensis* (Muratori, xx. p. 58).

³ *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 43.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁵ Cf. below, Chapter XII.

until 23 April, nearly two months later, that Pius resumed the road to Mantua.

Throughout the time that the Curia was in migration the ordinary course of business went on unchecked. Embassies and letters flowed in at every stage of the journey, gradually making Pius familiar with the details of his work, and enabling him to gather up the diverse threads of Papal policy. At Perugia, the Pope's vassal, Federico, Count of Urbino, came to do homage and to take counsel about the war which he was waging upon that unruly feudatory of the Church, Sigismondo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini. To Siena came ambassadors from the kings of Aragon, Hungary, and Bohemia and other European powers to offer obedience to the new Pope. Now on the road between Siena and Florence, Sigismondo Malatesta having been beaten by Federico of Urbino, sought the mediation and protection of his over-lord. Other vassals of the Church also came to swell the Papal cortege, and Pius made his entry into Florence in a litter, carried by his attendant feudatories. Among them walked Galeazzo Maria Sforza, the sixteen-year-old son of the Duke of Milan, who had been sent by his father to escort the Pope to Mantua. Pius was pleased with this mark of attention, and could not say too much in praise of the handsome, well-mannered, gifted boy. "It was indeed astonishing to hear matured opinions coming from youthful lips, and the thoughts of old age uttered by a beardless youth."¹ Such was the humanist's comment upon Galeazzo's complimentary orations; he delighted also in the boyish grace with which Galeazzo sprang from his horse to kiss the Pope's feet, and in the eagerness with which he put his shoulder to the litter and insisted on taking his share of work as a bearer.

When the procession reached the gates of Florence, the magistrates of the Republic replaced the feudatories as bearers, and carried Pius in state to the Duomo.

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. ii. pp. 48-9.

At the sight of this queen among cities, in all the fairness of her spring beauty, Pius forgot his Sienese prejudices, and paid ungrudging tribute to the glories of Florence.¹ The Duomo, the Baptistery of S. Giovanni, the Palazzo della Signoria, the Arno with her stately bridges, the villas "full of delights," smiling down from the encircling hills, each in turn made their appeal to him. Above all, he revered Florence as the home of famous men. In the city of Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, and their illustrious followers, the humanist Pope, even though he were a son of Siena, felt that he was treading on holy ground. Pius evinced much interest in the uncrowned monarch of Florence, Cosimo dei Medici, but he had no opportunity of intercourse with him. Whether from political motives or through genuine illness, Cosimo kept his bed throughout the Pope's visit.²

From Florence Pius made his way across the steep passes of the Apennines to find a less pleasant resting-place in the turbulent city of Bologna.³ This hotbed of faction was a perpetual source of trouble to her nominal suzerain the Pope, and Pius's visit, on this occasion, was only made possible by the Duke of Milan, who sent a force of cavalry to keep the peace during his sojourn within the city. The sight of the Milanese soliders guarding the streets gave Pius a feeling of insecurity which he never lost until the time came for his departure. So electrical was the atmosphere that, when the city-orator embellished his address of welcome with remarks more true than tactful on the evils of civil strife, the citizens insisted on his exile. It was with considerable relief that Pius quitted Bologna, and passed to the splendours which waited him at Borso d'Este's Court at Ferrara. The Pope's friendship with the Lord of Ferrara dated from Frederick III's Italian expedition, when Borso had gratified Æneas by claiming him as a kinsman. Borso now hoped to profit by this old

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. ii. pp. 49-51.

² *Ibid.*, p. 50.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-6. Cf. also Pastor, vol. iii. p. 56.

intimacy to obtain the ducal title from his suzerain ; therefore he spared no pains upon the entertainment of his guests. The Pope was lodged in the Este palace, while the Cardinals were provided for among the Ferrarese nobility. The chief lords of Romagna also came to Ferrara for the occasion, and all alike were entertained at Borso's expense throughout their stay in the city.¹ Needless to say, Pius took the keenest pleasure in the round of festivities provided for him, and perhaps most of all he enjoyed his conversations with the two veteran humanists Guarino and Aurispa.² But, in the midst of his enjoyment, he contrived to parry his host's importunity, and to leave Ferrara without committing himself upon the question of the ducal title.

The long and varied progress was drawing to its close. On 25 May, Pius embarked upon Borso's sumptuously equipped vessel and sailed up the Po towards Mantua ; meanwhile the Marquis of Mantua's ship plied alongside, ready to receive the traveller from the moment of his entering Mantuan territory. The banks were lined with eager spectators, the valleys rang with the sound of trumpets, and the stately procession of boats, with banners fluttering in the breeze, made the river seem like a forest.³ Pius passed the night of 26 May in the immediate vicinity of Mantua, and on the following morning he made his solemn entry into the city. At the head of the procession rode three of the Cardinals, followed by twelve white, riderless horses with golden saddles and bridles. After them were carried three banners, one bearing the Cross, another the keys of the Church, and the third the arms of the Piccolomini. Behind walked the clergy of Mantua, and then came another white horse, carrying the Host in a golden box surrounded by lighted candles. A goodly company of nobles and ecclesiastics preceded the Pope, and last of all came the little, bent figure, resplendent in

¹ *Diario Ferrarese* (Muratori, xxiv. pp. 202-4).

² *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 57.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

purple and jewels, the centre of the magnificent throng. "The Holy Father is a little, rosy man, with red rims to his eyes, about sixty years of age. . . . He is gouty and cannot walk, so that he is obliged to be carried."¹ Such is the verdict of the Mantuan chronicler who watched the Pope make his entry into the city "in great triumph," and pass through the flower-bedecked streets to the lodgings prepared for him in the Gonzaga palace.

The Mantuans, says Pius, "are a most courteous people, loving hospitality,"² and nothing could exceed the enthusiasm of their welcome. Lodovico Gonzaga, the cultivated Marquis, was proud of the honour done to his little State, and, as the pupil of Vittorino da Feltre and the patron of Mantegna, he recognised a kindred spirit in the humanist Pope. His German wife, Barbara of Brandenburg, was also prepared to offer a cordial reception to one so closely connected with her home and friends. With her was Bianca Maria Sforza, Duchess of Milan, and her charming children, who had come to Mantua in order to greet the Pope on his arrival. On the day after Pius II's entry these ladies paid him a ceremonial visit, and Ippolita Sforza, a girl of fourteen, delivered an elegant Latin oration, which pleased the Pope as much as her brother's performance had done at Florence a few weeks before. "A goddess could not have spoken better," is the comment of one of the Cardinals who heard her.³ The courtesy and enthusiasm of his hosts did much to obscure the fact that no foreign princes or ambassadors were present to meet the Pope. He had reached Mantua five days before his time. For the moment he could rest content with his own achievement, and trust that the Congress of Mantua might yet become the epoch-making gathering which his imagination pictured.

¹ Schivenoglia, *Cronaca di Mantova*, p. 135 (*Raccolta di cronisti e documenti storici Lombardi inediti*, vol. ii. Milano, 1857).

² *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 58.

³ Scarampo to F. Strozzi, Mantua, 2 June 1459. Cf. Pastor, vol. iii. p. 60.

On 1 June, High Mass in the Duomo opened the proceedings of the Congress. At the conclusion of Mass Pius showed by a sign from the throne that he wished to address the assembled multitude. In a weak, faltering voice he began by expressing his deep disappointment at finding so small a company present to meet him at Mantua. "We had hoped, brethren and sons, to find many envoys of kings when we came to this town. Few are here, and we see that we were mistaken; the devotion of Christians to their religion is not as great as we believed." Yet the Pope, who in spite of age and sickness had "despised the Apennines and the winter," was not prepared to yield at the first sign of defeat. He had resolved to remain at his post so long as there was any hope of fresh arrivals, and he begged those already at Mantua to pray that the powers of Christendom might yet be moved to send representatives to the Congress. "If they come, we will consult with them over the Commonwealth; if not, we shall be obliged to return home, and to bear the lot which God sends us. We will never desert the defence of the Faith so long as life and strength remain to us; nor shall we falter if we are required to lay down our life for the sheep." ¹

So began the weary weeks of waiting, a time of severe trial to anyone of Pius's eager, impatient disposition. He spent the long days in composing letters, of ever increasing urgency, which went out from Mantua to every corner of Europe, imploring Christian powers to attend the Congress. "We expected the princes to come hither, or at least to send their envoys if they could not come themselves, and we are greatly astonished that none have arrived." ² So wrote Pius to the Bishop of Eichstadt. To the city of Bologna he wrote: "Again and yet again we exhort you in the Lord, and straitly charge you to neglect

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 60. Cf. also Mansi, *Pius II Orationes*, vol. ii. p. 206.

² Pius II to John, Bishop of Eichstadt, 31 May 1459 (*Pastor*, vol. iii. Appendix 11).

your duty no longer,"¹ and a week later to the Duke of Savoy, "Up to the present day we have not ceased to expect the envoys which you have so long promised to send."² But his pleading fell on deaf ears. The Christian powers regarded the Crusade as an excellent cause, which had their heartfelt approval, but for which they were not prepared to make sacrifices. They wished to avoid attending the Congress, lest their approval should involve practical consequences, and they should find themselves committed to an expensive foreign war in which they had no personal interest. As early as January 1459, the Emperor had made up his mind not to come to Mantua, and the envoy who bore his excuses gave a variety of reasons which made it necessary for Frederick to remain at home. Pius, however, was accustomed to dealing with Frederick III. "Your answer . . . meets neither our expectations nor the necessities of the case," he retorted. "If you stay away, there is no one who will not think himself sufficiently excused. For the honour of the German nation, for the glory of your name, for the welfare of the Christian religion . . . we entreat you to reconsider the matter and to incline your mind towards attending the Congress."³ Knowing the Emperor as he did, it is hard to believe that Pius ever thought he would come to Mantua in person, but he probably hoped that plain-speaking might frighten the timid Emperor into sending a distinguished embassy. Great was his vexation when the Imperial embassy arrived headed by three Court officials, the Bishop of Trieste, Johann Hinderbach, and Heinrich Senfleben. They were excellent and capable men in their way, and the two last were personal friends of the Pope, but they possessed neither the rank nor the influence which would enable them to speak with weight at

¹ Pius II to Bologna, 28 July 1459 (Pastor, vol. iii. Appendix 17).

² Pius II to Louis of Savoy, 6 Aug. 1459 (Pastor, vol. iii. Appendix 20).

³ Pius II to Emperor Frederick III, 26 Jan. 1459 (Pastor, vol. iii. Appendix 5).

the Congress. Pius flatly refused to acknowledge them as the Emperor's representatives at Mantua, and wrote to demand that more honourable ambassadors should be sent in their place. His letter to Frederick III was couched in less stinging words than the *Commentaries* would have us believe, but it was sufficiently indicative of his displeasure. "It is small honour to you," he wrote, "that, in so high a cause, your envoys should not yet be here. . . . We exhort you to send ambassadors with full powers, and of such rank that they can represent your person worthily at this Congress. . . . Those whom you have already sent to us see clearly that they are not fitted for such a task and are gladly returning to you."¹ After five months of waiting, the Pope's persistency was rewarded by the arrival of the Margrave Charles of Baden and two Bishops to act as the Emperor's representatives. Other princes followed the Imperial lead, and before the end of the year a respectable contingent of German ambassadors was gathered in Mantua. Yet it soon transpired that all these envoys treated the essential object of the Congress as a matter of secondary importance. Dragged to Mantua by the Pope's pertinacity, they seized the opportunity for airing their own grievances against the Papacy, and for furthering their own interests. The attitude of the Germans is typical of that of other nations. The Congress of Mantua was never a Congress in the true sense of the word. It was, rather, a succession of embassies from Italian and ultramontane powers to the Pope at Mantua. Coming at the beginning of Pius II's pontificate, it was a valuable introduction to the details of European policy in their relation to the Papacy, and it did much to make him deal with them successfully. Yet, as a Congress on the Eastern question, it was almost as great a failure as its forerunner of Regensburg.

¹ Pius II to Frederick III, 1 June 1459 (Voigt, vol. iii. p. 50). Cf. also *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 65, and Pastor, vol. iii. pp. 63 *seq.* Apparently the Bishop of Trieste and his colleagues remained at Mantua as Imperial agents in spite of what was said about their departure.

Some weeks elapsed before even these half-hearted embassies began to struggle into Mantua. Meanwhile Pius had to cope with the clamours of the Eastern envoys who thronged his palace, piteously demanding aid against the Turk, and with the murmurs of the Cardinals, many of whom were only anxious to find an excuse for returning to Rome. "The place was marshy and unhealthy," they complained, "the heat was raging, there was no good wine or food to be had, many people were ill with fever, and soon there would be many dead; there was nothing to be heard but the croaking of frogs."¹ Chief among the grumblers was Cardinal Scarampo, who went about "among his household, and even in the circle of the prelates, declaring that the Pope's schemes were childish, and that he showed little experience or prudence in leaving Rome and wandering among strange hosts, thinking to move kings to war by his exhortations and to destroy the invincible forces of the Turk"² Ere long Scarampo betook himself to Venice, where he did his best to prejudice the Venetians against the Crusade. Old Cardinal Jacopo Tebaldo, also, waxed eloquent over the Pope's folly in coming to Mantua and putting money into the pockets of strangers while his own Romans were left in poverty. "How true is the popular saying that it is the worst wheel of a chariot which creaks the loudest!" is Pius's comment upon his detractor. "Jacopo did not attain to the Cardinalate on his own merits but on those of his brother, who was the doctor of Pope Calixtus."³

In spite of discouragement and disapproval the Pope stuck to his post, and in the end his perseverance did not go unrewarded. Many powers had doubted whether he would really come to Mantua, and had postponed the question of sending envoys until after his arrival. Others had procrastinated, in the hope that the Pope would grow tired of waiting and that the news of his departure would rid them of an irksome duty. But the Pope's staying

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 61.

² MS. of *Commentarii*, lib. iii.; Cugnoni, p. 195.

³ *Loc. cit.*

powers were stronger than those of the princes. On the 18th of August ¹ the monotonous spell of waiting was broken by the arrival of an embassy from the Duke of Burgundy. A brilliant company, headed by the Duke's nephew John of Cleves, and Jean de Croy, had entered Italy a week or two earlier, amid "very great rain, and hail like stones falling from heaven." ² Francesco Sforza met the envoys outside Milan and conducted them to the splendid apartments which he had prepared for them in his palace, "with a good fire to revive them, which was indeed a welcome sight." ³ So agreeably were the Burgundians entertained that it was some time before they left Milan for Mantua. When at last they arrived at their destination, John of Cleves refused to discuss the Crusade until he had obtained satisfaction in a matter at issue between himself and the Archbishop of Cologne. The town of Soest having rebelled against the Archbishop, Pius II had issued an admonition to the citizens to return to their rightful allegiance. But John had taken Soest under his protection, and demanded that the admonition should be withdrawn. "The matter so fell out that it was necessary either to forsake the path of justice for the time being, or to dissolve the Congress before it had accomplished any work. For if Cleves departed in anger many others would not come to the Congress, but would greedily seize the opportunity for remaining at home. The Pope was anxious, and uncertain what to do; it was grievous to him to deny justice to those who asked it of him, yet he considered it less dangerous to suspend justice than to leave the Catholic Faith undefended. . . . He therefore withdrew the admonition, to satisfy Cleves, and promised Cologne to renew it after these matters relating to the Faith had been concluded." ⁴ So the

¹ Cf. Pastor, vol. iii. p. 71.

² Matthieu de Coussy, *Chronique*, p. 216 (*Choix de Chroniques et Mémoires sur l'histoire de France*, ed. Buchon, vol. viii.).

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 217.

⁴ *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 68.

temporalities of the Archbishop were sacrificed to the crusading cause, but, even after this concession, Cleves was loath to commit himself to any promises of aid. After much negotiation, he at last agreed that Burgundy should send 2000 horse and 4000 foot into the field. Then, to the great disappointment of the Pope, he and his colleagues left Mantua, regardless of Pius's entreaties that they should remain to confer with the other embassies, whose arrival he was daily expecting.

The next episode in the history of Pius II's sojourn at Mantua began with the arrival of Francesco Sforza. One day in September a sumptuous fleet of forty-seven vessels sailed up the Mincio, and crowds turned out to gaze upon the soldier-Duke who had made all Italy ring with the fame of his exploits. Pius was delighted to see Sforza again and to renew the friendship which had been begun, ten years before, in the camp outside Milan. The Duke was fast approaching his sixtieth year, yet "he rode like a youth," and seemed to the Pope to be in every way worthy of his high position.¹ Sforza's coming was of real value to the Congress, and the ceremony of his reception was made as impressive as possible. Pius II's former master, Francesco Filelfo, acted as spokesman for the Duke, and the Pope himself made the answering oration, in which he called Filelfo "the Attic Muse," and extolled Sforza as a true Crusader—a model for all Christian princes.² For all that, it had necessitated considerable pressure on the Pope's part to bring Sforza to Mantua, and it may be doubted whether he would have come at all, had it not been for his anxiety to secure Pius II finally for the cause of King Ferrante in Naples. Sforza was ready enough to give the Pope a little encouragement in his laudable endeavour to drive the Turk from Europe, if by so doing he could obtain Papal aid in keeping the French out of Italy.

The news that the Duke of Milan was in Mantua roused

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 72.

² *Ibid.*, p. 73.

the Italian powers to action. Envoys from Florence, Venice, Genoa, and other States at last made their appearance, and the Sienese ambassador could report that he found himself in "a fair Mantua . . . adorned by the presence of many Bishops, Lords, Ambassadors, and Courtiers."¹ On 26 September, nearly four months after the opening of the Congress, the first formal sitting was held. A Mass of the Holy Spirit was sung in the Duomo, in the presence of "a very great number of people of every nation," and at its conclusion the Pope delivered "a long and most elegant oration which lasted for the space of two hours."² Many feared that the Pope's voice would not be equal to the strain, but enthusiasm carried him triumphantly over physical disabilities. "Although he was suffering at that time from a grievous cough, he was so aided by Divine power that he did not cough once, or experience the slightest hindrance in speaking."³ This oration ranks among the best and most famous of Pius II's rhetorical efforts. All his deep sympathy with the Eastern Christians, all his learning, all his oratory, were thrown into his impassioned utterances. He appealed in turn to the pride, to the pity, and to the ambition of his hearers, determined to leave no note unsounded that might awaken a responsive thrill in the hearts of the people. To Pius, all on fire with zeal for the holy cause, it seemed almost impossible that his audience should remain cold. As he looked down upon the crowded Cathedral his thoughts flew from the hard Renaissance world to the bygone ages of faith. He remembered the inspired gathering at Clermont, four centuries earlier. "Would that there were here to-day," he cried, "Godfrey or Baldwin, Eustace, Hugh the Great, Bohemund, Tancred, and others who, in past days, won back Jerusalem. They

¹ Dispatch of N. Severino, 25 Sept. 1459⁷ (Pastor, vol. iii. p. 75).

² Francesco Sforza to his wife, Mantua, 26 Sept. 1459 (cf. Pastor, vol. iii. Appendix 27, from *Archivio di Stato*, Milano).

³ *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 82.

would not have suffered us to speak so long, but rising from their seats, as once they did before our predecessor Urban II, they would have cried with glad voice, 'Deus lo vult, Deus lo vult!' " ¹

"If an appreciation of eloquence had borne any practical fruit, the Turk would soon have been driven back into Asia." ² Many praised the Pope's speech, but few were prepared to act upon his exhortations. On the following day a conference was held upon the ways and means of carrying out the war. Here the tedious haggling over details and the reluctance of the envoys to commit themselves to any definite scheme contrasted sadly with the stirring scenes of the day before. Sforza, like most old soldiers, was always pleased to give advice on military questions. At his suggestion it was agreed that Hungary and other countries on the Turkish border should provide troops for the Crusade, Italy and other more distant States supplying the money. The Venetians pronounced that thirty galleys and eight smaller vessels should suffice for the naval operations, and Pius summed up the discussion by saying that some 50,000 troops would be required, which could be paid for by a tax of a tenth on the revenues of the clergy, a thirtieth on those of the laity, and a twentieth on all the possessions of the Jews, to be levied for three years in succession. "All approved of the Pope's decision," ³ but, when Pius tried to make the various representatives sign the proposals, it was soon seen that the scheme was theoretical rather than practical. The Florentines had to be won over by a separate agreement, and the Venetians flatly refused to sign, except on conditions that were obviously impossible. Meanwhile, the Duke of Milan felt that he had done his duty by the Congress, and was anxious to depart. On 3 October he left Mantua, the other envoys began to melt away, and Pius could only make the best of

¹ Mansi, *Pii II Orationes*, vol. ii. p. 9. Cf. also *Opera*, Ep. 397.

² Creighton, *History of the Papacy*, vol. iii. p. 224.

³ *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 84.

the small result which he had obtained. Outwardly he maintained a brave face, but in a letter to Carvajal he reveals his bitter disappointment. "To confess the truth," he writes, "we do not find such zeal in the minds of Christians as we hoped. We find few who have a greater care for public matters than for their own interests."¹

In the middle of October Pius took a brief holiday, in which he stayed at the venerable sanctuary of S. Maria delle Grazie, five miles outside Mantua. A record of his visit is preserved in the life-size effigy which has its place in the remarkable series of statues of famous men who have visited the Church.² His companions now urged that he had done all that was possible at Mantua, and that the time had come to return to Rome. But Pius was determined to await the arrival of the French and German embassies, and after four days he was back at his post.

Before the end of the month the envoys of Archduke Albert of Austria, the Emperor's brother, reached Mantua. Save for the Emperor's discredited representatives, they were the first Germans to appear at the Congress, but the Pope's pleasure in their arrival was spoiled by the sight of his old enemy, Gregory Heimburg. When the envoys had an audience with the Pope, Gregory acted as their chief spokesman. It was unnecessary, he began, for him to sound the praises of the house of Hapsburg. Had not "the famed and laurel-crowned Æneas" won the highest praise for an oration on the subject on an earlier occasion? For himself, he would be content "with dry words and ungarnished speech."³ Heimburg was even rude enough to keep his hat on during the audience. He must be excused, he said, from uncovering his head, for, if he did so, the cold would spoil the effect of his oration. This act of

¹ Raynaldus, *Annales*, 1459, No. 78.

² Pius II's statue bears the following inscription:—

"Dopo le cure dolorosi e gravi,
Chiuso il concilio, il successor di Piero,
A te porge Maria ambe le chiavi."

³ Voigt, vol. iii. pp. 177 *seq.*, from Cod. msc. lat. 522, fol. 156, 161, Munich.

discourtesy and the thinly veiled sarcasm of his words were proof that Heimbург had come to Mantua intending mischief. Throughout his stay he was "a sower of much discord."¹ Convinced himself of the Pope's duplicity, he contrived to foster the opinion that the Crusade was a mere pretext for raising money, and the failure of the German envoys to arrive at any common understanding was largely his work. He also helped to create ill-feeling between Pius and his former pupil Sigismund, Duke of Tyrol, who came to Mantua in order to refer a private quarrel with the Bishop of Brixen to the Pope's judgment. Heimbург introduced Sigismund to the Papal presence in a speech which contained covert allusions to discreditable episodes in the Pope's earlier life, when the Emperor's Italian secretary had aided the youthful Sigismund in his love adventures. The name of Æneas, he said, was deeply imprinted on Sigismund's mind "by sweet-sounding poems and by many unforgettable letters," and he rejoiced to think that such a "jewel of eloquence" adorned the Apostolic See.² The outcome of the interview was that Sigismund and the Pope parted from each other sore and angry, and that the Brixen quarrel dragged out its wearisome course during the greater part of Pius II's pontificate. By the time that Heimbург left Mantua he was amply avenged for the mortifications which he had endured in the summer of 1446, when he paced restlessly over Monte Giordano beneath the malicious eye of Æneas Silvius.

With regard to the Crusade, the utmost that Pius could obtain from the Germans was a renewal of the promises made at former Diets. All details were left to be settled by representatives of the German nation and the Papal Legate, in conference at Nürnberg.³ Cardinal Bessarion, one of the few whole-hearted supporters of the Pope's crusading policy, was appointed Legate for this

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 90.

² Voigt, iii. pp. 100 *seq.*, from the Munich MS. (Cod. lat. 522, fol. 61).

³ Raynaldus, *Annales*, 1459, No. 72, and 1460, No. 18.

purpose, and Pius set a seal upon the deliberations by nominating the Emperor as general of the crusading army. The phlegmatic Frederick could hardly be considered as an ideal Crusader, but he was empowered to appoint some other prince in his stead, and the man upon whom Pius had set his heart was Albert Achilles of Brandenburg. Pius had long been urging Albert's attendance at the Congress, and his arrival in Mantua, at the close of 1459, shed a lustre over the final proceedings. Albert's manners had improved since the days when he had shocked Æneas's sense of decorum by bursting in upon the Emperor at Neustadt,¹ and, as the head of the Imperial party in Germany, he was anxious to be on good terms with the Pope. Many were his protestations of zeal for the Holy War, to which Pius replied by hailing him as "the German Achilles" and bestowing on him a consecrated sword with which to do battle against the Turk.²

In midst of these somewhat profitless negotiations with the Germans, a French embassy at last arrived in Mantua. From the point of view of the Crusade the Pope's deliberations with the French were as unsatisfactory as all the proceedings of the Congress, but in matters nearer home he achieved a success which did much to strengthen his position in Europe. Two facts accounted for the strained relations which existed between the Pope and the French king. On the one hand, the Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges still remained in force, a standing menace to the Pope's authority over the Church in France. On the other hand, the Pope had defied the claims of the French prince, René of Anjou, by acknowledging Ferrante of Aragon as King of Naples. Thus all parties were in a state of nervous apprehension when the French embassy rode into Mantua on 14 November. Pius feared that the French would throw down the gauntlet by refusing to make the customary obedience to the new Pope, and the French on their side were equally

¹ Cf. above, p. 124.

² *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 91.

uncertain of the reception which would be accorded to them.¹

To the relief of every one, the first audience passed off without a hitch, and the obedience of the French nation was proffered amid a great display of oratory on the part of the Bishop of Paris and of the Pope.² But the crux of the situation was reached on 30 November, when the French envoys came before the Pope to plead the cause of René of Anjou. The Bailli of Rouen was the spokesman of France, and he dwelt upon the services rendered by his nation to the Apostolic See, in return for which, he said, "Pius had spurned the noble blood of the Lilies, and had preferred that of Aragon."³ Now he called upon the Pope to annul his "unjust and ill-considered" investiture, and to exalt the rightful heir, René of Anjou, to the throne of Naples. Pius was thus forced to declare himself, but he refused to reply until he had consulted the Cardinals, and eventually postponed his answer for several days on the plea of ill-health. The French regarded this as a mere excuse for gaining time, but Pius tells us that he was "seized by severe pain in the stomach and by a racking cough."⁴ At last, "weak and oppressed with bitter pain, the Pope left his bed-chamber for the audience hall, and seated himself upon his throne, pale and anxious." As he began to speak his strength revived, and the words flowed from his lips. He "sang the praises of the French far better than the Bailli," and explained that, in investing Ferrante, he had merely recognised the *status quo*, expressly safeguarding the rights of Anjou.⁵ Then, by a clever stroke of

¹ Cf. Nicholas Petit (D'Achery, *Spicilegium*, vol. iii. pp. 806 *seq.*): "Croy que nostre dit Saint Père aura matière pour lever les oreilles. Plusieurs de Messieurs les Cardinaulx qui encores ne savent l'effect de la matière font doubte de l'issue."

² *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 86; Mansi, *Orationes*, vol. ii. p. 31. An alternative oration which the Pope had prepared in the event of the French not proffering obedience is to be found in Mansi, vol. ii. p. 219.

³ *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 87.

⁴ *Loc. cit.*

⁵ *Loc. cit.*, and Mansi, vol. ii. pp. 40 *seq.*

diplomacy, he turned the subject, and raised the whole question of the Pragmatic Sanction. The French King complained of the Pope's action in Naples, but the Pope's grievance against the French was far greater. They had promulgated a law against the Apostolic See which hung like thick darkness over the land and imperilled the souls of the people. In vain the ambassadors strove to defend themselves. "They employed no argument that the Pope did not promptly dissipate; ashamed, confused, and silent, they showed that they were vanquished."¹ The Cardinals were filled with delight at this vigorous championship of the rights of the Papacy. "Never," they said, "in the memory of our fathers, have words been spoken so worthy of a Pope." Pius, meanwhile, returned cheerfully to his bed-chamber, to find that he had made a complete recovery; "the warmth of his oration had driven all cold from his body."²

When the French and German embassies had come and gone, Pius II's business at Mantua was well-nigh completed. All that remained was to put the coping-stone upon his work. On 18 January 1460 he published the Bull *Execrabilis*, which condemned the practice of appealing from the Pope to a future General Council as an "execrable abuse, unheard of in former times." All such appeals were pronounced invalid, and any person who made or in any way promoted them was declared excommunicate.³ The Bull *Execrabilis* was a strange edict to emanate from a former champion of the Conciliar movement. But Pius had learned, by bitter experience, what abuses appeals to a future Council could be made to serve. He knew that the Conciliar movement was dead, and that its principles had become mere instruments of obstruction in the hands of a self-seeking opposition. Thus he seized the opportunity to strengthen the monarchical constitution of the Church, and to

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 88.

² *Ibid.*, p. 87.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 91-2; Raynaldus, 1460, No. 10.

vindicate the Papal authority. By this means alone could he hope to realise the aims of the Congress of Mantua, and to unite Christendom beneath the crusading banner.

The Congress of Mantua closed, as it had begun, with High Mass in the Cathedral. At the conclusion of the service, Bulls were read decreeing a three years' Crusade against the Turk, and ordering prayers for its success to be offered every Sunday in all Christian churches. Indulgences were granted to all who took part in the Crusade for eight months, or who paid and equipped a soldier for the same period; decrees were also published embodying the schemes for raising money which had been passed at the September session.¹ Then, in a farewell speech, Pius summed up the results of the Congress.² "We confess," he said, "that all that we hoped has not been achieved, yet neither has all been left undone . . . nay, far more has been done than was prophesied by many." After exhorting the faithful to do their utmost, and to leave the rest in God's hands, he left the Papal throne, and kneeling before the high altar, chanted, amidst tears and sighs, a Litany which he had arranged for the occasion. The whole body of clergy devoutly responded, and the Litany ended with a solemn prayer for God's blessing upon the Crusade—

"Almighty and Everlasting God, who in Thy mercy hast redeemed the human race by the Precious Blood of Thy Beloved Son, and hast raised the world lying in darkness to the light of the Gospel, we beseech Thee that all faithful Christian princes and people may, in this time of visitation, so valiantly take up arms against the impious Turks, scorers of the Gospel, and all other enemies of the Saving Cross, that, fighting for the glory of Thy Name, and upheld by the strength of Thy arm, they may win victorious trophies for Thy Church." ³

¹ Cf. Raynaldus, 1460, Nos. 1-7.

² Mansi, vol. ii. p. 78.

³ Mansi, *Orationes*, vol. ii. pp. 84-6, where the Litany is also given. Cf. *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 93.

Rising from his knees, the Pope dismissed the assembly with his blessing. On 19 January he left Mantua.

The Congress of Mantua, if it had done nothing else, had given Pius II an insight into the exact nature of his position. By the time that his long sojourn in Mantua drew to its close, the threads of Papal policy were all in his hands. The chief problems of his reign had been touched upon, friends and foes alike had revealed themselves; and for a clear-sighted politician like himself, it was not hard to estimate the measure of success which he would achieve. As ruler of the States of the Church, and one of the chief territorial powers in Italy, he had every reason for encouragement. Francesco Sforza had given ample proof of the support which he was prepared to offer to one who saw eye to eye with him over Neapolitan affairs, and Milan and the Papacy, together, had every hope of bringing their championship of the House of Aragon to a triumphant conclusion. As spiritual sovereign of Europe, Pius could look back on the Congress with some satisfaction. He had raised the prestige of the Papacy in the sight of every European nation, and, more especially with regard to France, he had given bold expression to its claims. If the Pragmatic Sanction were once abandoned, the last trace of the Conciliar movement would be wiped out, and the restored Papacy would issue forth in new glory from the period of humiliation through which it had passed. In one aspect alone, and in that which appealed most strongly to all that was best and noblest in his nature, Pius could derive little satisfaction from the proceedings of the Congress. As champion of the crusading cause, his sole source of inspiration lay in his own high courage. By sheer force of will, he had shamed Europe into some semblance of activity. Yet it was clear that the fair show of preparation would vanish at the first contact with reality, and that the Congress of Mantua was but the first act of the tragedy which was to culminate five years later at Ancona. Thus the Congress is not only an introduction, it is also an



1. MEDAL BY ANDREA GUACCIALOTTI. (OBSERVE) PORTRAIT OF PIUS II
2. GOLD DUCAT OF PIUS II'S PONTIFICATE. (REVERSE) S. PETER WITH
KEY AND BOOK
3. GOLD DUCAT OF PIUS II'S PONTIFICATE. (OBSERVE) PICCOLOMINI
ARMS SURMOUNTED BY TIARA AND CROSSED KEYS
4. MEDAL BY ANDREA GUACCIALOTTI. (REVERSE) THE PELICAN IN HER
PIETY

Inscription : ALES UT HEC CORDIS PAVI DE SANGVINE NATOS

British Museum

epitome of Pius II's reign. Prosperity in all things Italian, comparative success in the affairs of Europe, in the East failure which the personality of the Pope alone prevented from being absolute. And both the smaller and the larger picture are set against a background of leisurely journeys and pleasant sight-seeing which lends to them a peculiar and fragrant atmosphere. The magic of Italian scenery illumines the record of these Papal pilgrimages, in which Pius, the artist and the man of letters, enters upon his heritage.

CHAPTER IX

PIUS II AND ITALY

BEFORE Pius left Mantua war had broken out in Naples, and many eyes were turned towards the Pope to see what part he would play in the struggle. He had invested Ferrante of Aragon with the Neapolitan crown, but this, as he was at pains to explain to the French envoys, was merely a temporary expedient. It was one thing for the Pope to recognise the existing King of Naples in order to be able to leave Rome without fear of reprisals from a hostile neighbour; it was quite another to fly in the face of Papal tradition, and to uphold Ferrante against an Angevin claimant who had actually made his appearance in Italy. Nevertheless, this was the course which Pius II had made up his mind to pursue. The events of the last year had convinced him that the cause of peace and the welfare of the States of the Church both called for an alliance between the Papacy and the strong powers of Italy. As an Italian prince the friendship of Francesco Sforza was more valuable to him than that of France, while the presence of a strong and friendly power in Naples was, from his point of view, the best of the alternatives which presented themselves. The old policy of the Popes had been to encourage the French claims to Naples, in order to keep the kingdom weak and incapable of offence to the States of the Church. Yet past experience had shown that disturbance in Naples inevitably spread to the Papal territories, and that what the Pope chiefly required in the ruler of Naples was a

guardian of the peace. "Can René drive out Piccinino from the States of the Church?" Pius asked the Archbishop of Marseilles when he pleaded the Angevin cause in Rome. The Archbishop could only reply in the negative. "Then what have we to expect from him if he cannot help us in our distress? We need a man in the kingdom who can protect both himself and us."¹ So Pius threw in his lot with Ferrante, and the Neapolitan succession war takes the first place in the history of his reign in Italy.

From the moment of Alfonso's death, the great feudatories of the kingdom, notably Marino da Marzano, Prince of Rossano, and Giovanni Antonio Orsini, Prince of Taranto, determined not to acquiesce in the rule of Ferrante. The man of whom Philippe de Commines wrote that he was "without grace or mercy" had already won an evil reputation in the Neapolitan kingdom, and the appearance of benevolence which marked the early days of his rule did not deceive the barons as to his true nature. Their eyes had turned first towards Aragon, in the hope that Alfonso's brother and successor, John II, might be induced to challenge the right of his bastard nephew to the throne of Naples. Failure in this direction threw them back upon a less powerful candidate—John of Calabria, the son and heir of the French claimant, René of Anjou. In the autumn of 1459, this Prince, "active both in mind and body,"² landed in Neapolitan territory, and the smouldering fires of rebellion burst into flames at the signal of his coming. He brought with him a fleet of twenty-four vessels, which had been built at Avignon out of the proceeds of the Turkish tithes raised in France and were destined for the East. John, however, did not scruple to "arm against Christians ships built for the protection of Christians,"³ and the Cardinal of Avignon was a party to the theft. The Angevin claimant was greeted on his landing by the Prince of Rossano "with such affection and rejoicing as might have been shown to a

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 36.

² *Ibid.*, lib. iv. p. 94.

³ *Loc. cit.*

god come to earth.”¹ He promptly won the Prince’s goodwill by standing godfather to his infant son, and the fame of his talents and affability spread far and wide. Meanwhile Ferrante was absent in Calabria, where rebellion had already broken out, and, but for the promptitude of his Queen, he would have returned home to find the Angevin banners floating over Naples. His difficulties were enormously increased by the fact that the Prince of Taranto, as Grand Constable of the Kingdom, had the bulk of the military forces in his hands. All depended on the attitude of the other Italian powers, and Ferrante besought them to lose no time in sending aid if they wished to keep the foreigner out of Italy. The Pope and the Duke of Milan responded to the appeal. When the campaign of 1460 began, Ferrante was aided by the Milanese forces under Alessandro Sforza, Lord of Pesaro, and by a Papal contingent under Simonetto da Castello. The influence of Milan and the Papacy had also secured for him the services of the famous *condottiere*, Federico, Count of Urbino, the kinsman of Sforza and the vassal of the Pope.

Pius paid a second visit to Florence on his journey south, and on this occasion he had an interview with Cosimo dei Medici, who expressed great surprise at the Pope’s action in embroiling himself with France on Ferrante’s account. “It would not conduce to the freedom of Italy if the French obtained the kingdom,” was the Pope’s pertinent reply; “in protecting Ferrante, Italy is protecting herself. Moreover, honesty demands that we should do this, owing to the treaties that were made with Alfonso; it is not permitted to us to break faith, as others do.”² This was a word in season to Cosimo, who had entered into alliance with Naples at the Peace of Lodi (1454), and yet was not moving a finger in Ferrante’s defence. His personal opinion on the Neapolitan question probably coincided with Pius II’s, but he could not turn

¹ Costanzo, *Storia del regno di Napoli*, vol. iii. p. 194.

² *Commentarii*, lib. iv. p. 96.

Florence from her traditional French policy. So "Cosimo praised the Pope's decision, and confessed that the mass of mankind will do nothing for the sake of justice unless constrained by expediency or fear. He then asked, not without modesty, that his nephew might be numbered among the Cardinals." ¹

From Florence Pius made his way to Siena, where he intended to spend the summer. He arrived on 31 January 1460, and took up his residence in his beloved city to watch the course of the Neapolitan war. Some days before his arrival in Siena, he learned that the *condottiere*, Jacopo Piccinino, had joined the Angevin faction, and was hurrying to Naples. He had already heard of Piccinino's intentions from Borso d'Este, who warned him that Piccinino was a dangerous enemy, and offered his services as a mediator. But Pius, knowing that the Lord of Ferrara was "more French than the French" in his sympathies, suspected treachery and rejected his offers.² Alessandro Sforza and Federico of Urbino at once received orders to keep watch for Piccinino in Romagna, and to try to prevent him from crossing the Neapolitan frontier. He, however, contrived to elude their vigilance, and slipped across the Tronto in order to raise the Angevin standard in the Abruzzi. Meanwhile the Papal troops under Simonetto were sent to join Ferrante, who was engaged in besieging John of Calabria in Sarno. This strong natural fortress, situated on the steep hillside, and protected at its base by the rushing waters of the Sarno, had struck Pius's notice during his travels in the Neapolitan kingdom in 1456. It was thus with personal knowledge of the strategical situation that the Pope watched the vicissitudes of the siege.³ John of Calabria had collected his forces in what appeared to be an impregnable retreat, intending to await the arrival of

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. iv. p. 96. The nephew was Filippo dei Medici, Bishop of Arezzo. Cf. Pastor, vol. iii. p. 294 note.

² *Commentarii*, lib. iv. p. 96.

³ Cf. *Commentarii*, lib. i. p. 27, and lib. iv. pp. 104-5.

Piccinino before taking the open field. But although Sarno could not be taken by assault, it could be starved into surrender; and as the summer wore on, and the blockade continued, the Angevins were on the point of yielding. Ferrante's troops, however, were clamouring for pay, and, on 7 July, he rashly countenanced an attack on Sarno in the hope of booty. The result was a crushing defeat for his cause. The Angevin forces routed the besieging army, and the Pope's general, Simonetto, who had thrown the weight of his advice against the attack, was killed in battle.¹ Ferrante escaped with a handful of cavalry to Naples, leaving his camp to be ransacked by the enemy.

Hard upon the battle of Sarno came the news of another disaster. On 22 July Piccinino fell upon Federico of Urbino and Alessandro Sforzà at San Fabbiano, and drove them back across the Tronto. This double defeat spread panic among Ferrante's supporters, and on all sides the friends of Anjou raised their heads. "Christ fought for us at Sarno," exclaimed the Angevin envoy at the Papal Court; "if He is on our side, we do not trouble about His Vicar." To which Pius replied, "You have known before this that Christ's Vicar is against you, and you will know it even more certainly in the future. . . . With all my strength, O Italy, will I succour you, and never suffer strangers to have rule over you."² These were brave words, but Neapolitan and Milanese authorities show that the Pope's behaviour, during this time of trial, was not so entirely courageous as he would have posterity believe. Pius was aware that his support of Ferrante was a new and even dangerous experiment. From the first a strong party in the Curia was opposed to his policy, and even the Aragonese themselves seemed hardly able to believe that he was in earnest. Report said that Ferrante made his rash attack on Sarno because he feared to delay longer

¹ Cf. Costanzo, vol. iii. pp. 205-10.

² *Commentarii*, lib. iv. p. 106.

lest the Papal forces should be recalled.¹ Others declared that Pius had connived at Piccinino's unhindered passage through Romagna from a selfish desire to prevent warfare in Papal territory.² Pius was fully alive to these currents of feeling, and while his friends suspected him, the Angevins never relaxed their efforts to win him to their side. For a person of his susceptibility, it became increasingly difficult to carry out a policy that was looked upon as strange and unprecedented. From the time of the reverses of July 1460, he began to waver. During the next two years it needed much persuasion from Francesco Sforza and several bribes from Ferrante to keep him true to his purpose.

On hearing of the Pope's vacillations, Ferrante made a bid for his support by yielding his rights over Terracina to the Church, and by presenting to the Pope's nephew, Andrea, the little town of Castiglione della Pescaia, on the Tuscan coast, together with the adjacent island of Giglio.³ These gifts sufficed to keep the Pope firm during the campaign of 1461, when his troops rendered valuable assistance to the Aragonese in the neighbourhood of Naples. The balance of success in this campaign lay on the whole with Ferrante. Yet with Apulia, Calabria, and Abruzzi each a separate centre of disaffection, success in one province often meant defeat in another. Pius was not far from the truth when he compared the Neapolitan war to a seven-headed monster: "if Ferrante succeeds in winning one battle, the enemy are seven times victorious."⁴ To a nervous temperament, wholly without military experience, these vicissitudes were a severe strain, and time after time the Duke of Milan had to bring his soldierly common sense

¹ Cf. Costanzo, vol. iii. p. 207.

² Simonetta, *Historia Francisci Primi* (Muratori, *Rev. Ital. Script.*, xxi. p. 709).

³ For Terracina, cf. *Commentarii*, lib. iv. p. 130, and Raynaldus, 1460, No. 65. For Castiglione and Giglio, cf. *Commentarii*, lib. iv. p. 108, and Simonetta, p. 727.

⁴ Simonetta, p. 732.

to bear upon the panic-stricken Pope. It was, said Francesco Sforza, a far more difficult task to keep the Pope steadfast than to bear the expenses and fatigues of the war.¹

In 1461 the Duke of Milan became seriously ill, and reports of his death were current throughout Italy. At the same time came news of various reverses at the seat of war. Pius was plunged into the lowest depths of despair, seeing himself, bereft of his stalwart partner, the solitary champion of a hopeless cause. Once more Ferrante came forward with a bribe, and in the autumn of 1461 another Papal nephew, Antonio, was married to the King's illegitimate daughter, being made Duke of Amalfi and Grand Justiciar of the Kingdom. Yet even his delight at the honours showered upon his nephew could not entirely restore the Pope's peace of mind. On 12 March 1462, the Milanese ambassador, Otto Carretto, forwarded to his master the report of an important conversation which had taken place between himself and Pius II.² After dismissing every one else from his presence, the Pope called Carretto to his side and said to him, "Messer Otto, you are a faithful servant of your lord, and as his affairs are most closely connected with my own, I will quite secretly impart certain matters to you, and then ask your advice concerning them." He proceeded to give a masterly sketch of the political situation, with a view to showing the overwhelming power of France, and the perilous path which Milan and the Papacy were treading in pursuing an anti-French policy in Naples. Milan, he said, was surrounded by the friends of France—Savoy, Montferrat, Ferrara; while in Venice she had a rival who would take prompt advantage of her weakness. Discontent was rife throughout the Duchy, and many of Sforza's subjects were ready to side with France or Venice

¹ Simonetta, p. 732.

² Pastor, vol. iii. pp. 142-6, from the original letter in the *Biblioteca Ambrosiana*, Milan.

against him.¹ Little or nothing could be expected from Florence; while as for Ferrante, he was hated by his people, and his treasury was exhausted. Save for Milan, the Papacy must stand alone. Yet, within the States of the Church, the Colonna were strongly French in sympathy, and many other Papal vassals were intriguing with Piccinino. Beyond the borders of Italy there were German malcontents, and the heretic King of Bohemia, who threatened the spiritual power of the Papacy. French ambassadors were now on their way to Rome. If Pius refused their demands with regard to Naples, would he not expose the Church to the perils of a General Council, if not of a schism, and jeopardise the whole position of the Papacy?

Carretto was aghost at the Pope's words, and did his utmost to present the situation in a more favourable light. To desert Ferrante at this juncture would, he urged, be a lamentable exhibition of weakness. The Pope feared a renewal of the schism if he resisted France, but an abject submission to France would go far to revive the conditions of the Papal captivity at Avignon. His representations were not without effect, and, after a few days, he was able to report that Pius was recovering from his panic. "My most anxious endeavour," he concludes, "will be to keep His Holiness firm in this matter, and to take care that no one should know of his vacillations."

The events of the next few months put an end to the trusty Carretto's worst anxieties. Just when Ferrante's cause seemed most hopeless, the tide turned in his favour, and his victory at Troja, on 18 August 1462, proved the decisive battle of the Neapolitan war. It was followed by his reconciliation with the Prince of Taranto, who had from the first sought the King's humiliation rather than his overthrow. The negotiations were conducted

¹ The Pope's words are confirmed by the report on the political condition of Milan tendered to the Duke by his agent, Antonio Vailati, in 1461. Cf. Ady, *A History of Milan under the Sforza*, pp. 82 seq.

by Cardinal Roverella, the Papal Legate, and Taranto was restored to all his former possessions and offices.¹ From this time forward Pius II's energies were directed towards ending the war, and in December 1462 he succeeded in bringing the envoys of the rival parties to a conference at Todi.² But neither Ferrante nor his opponent were ready for peace, and fighting continued throughout the year 1463. It was clear, however, that the real issue of the war was decided, and the Neapolitan barons, of both factions, devoted themselves to strengthening their own position, with a view to the future. The Pope's share in this last campaign limited itself to furthering the interests of his nephew, the Duke of Amalfi. When the young Count Ruggiero of Celano turned against his mother, a loyal Aragonese, and threw in his lot with Piccinino, the Pope promptly laid claim to Celano as a Papal fief. Troops were sent to protect the defenceless widow against her unnatural son, but when peace was restored the lady only recovered a few castles, while the County of Celano was conferred upon Antonio Piccolomini.³ Pius also had hopes of securing the suzerainty of the city of Aquila, which clung to its traditions of independence and sought Papal protection against Ferrante. But plague within the city, and the armies of Aragon without, humbled its pride. Aquila gave itself to the King of Naples, and the envoys who had been sent to offer allegiance to the Pope were hastily recalled.⁴

Meanwhile John of Calabria had retired to Ischia. Early in 1464 he recognised that his cause was hopeless, and took ship for Provence. He left behind him a fragrant memory. "He had," says Pontano, "most charming manners, and showed singular faith and loyalty. . . . He was a good Christian, full of generosity and kind-

¹ Costanzo, iii. pp. 252-3. Cf. also *Commentarii*, lib. x. pp. 247-51.

² *Commentarii*, lib. x. p. 271.

³ *Ibid.*, lib. xi. p. 275, and lib. xii. p. 331.

⁴ *Ibid.*, lib. xii. pp. 322 and 330.

liness, a lover of justice, and more grave and circumspect than most Frenchmen.”¹ Many a subject of the Neapolitan kingdom, crushed beneath Ferrante's iron rule, and sickened by the tale of his treacheries, must have sighed for the return of this gallant prince. Nevertheless, Pius II's policy was in accordance with the true interests of his country. Only by keeping the passes of the Alps barred against the foreigner could Italy attain to some measure of unity and good government under the leadership of her five chief States. Pius had wavered where he should have stood firm, and had worked for the advancement of his family with unblushing persistency. For all that, he had chosen the path of patriotic statesmanship, and had followed it to a triumphant conclusion. Owing to Pius II and to those who worked with him, Italy enjoyed those thirty years of peace and freedom from foreign interference which lay between the close of the Neapolitan war and the invasion of Charles VIII. They were years which have made Italy famous for all time, in which the fairest flowers of the Renaissance were brought to their perfection.

Closely interwoven with the Neapolitan war is Pius II's long struggle with Sigismondo Malatesta. This wayward child of the Renaissance, constant only in his devotion to the Arts, had much in common with the humanist Pope. Pius might say, in righteous horror, of the Malatesta temple at Rimini, that “it was filled with so many profane works that it resembled a heathen temple rather than a place of Christian worship.”² Nevertheless, the ideals which inspired its creator differed little from those which brought Pienza into being. Church and city alike are the expression of a personality, the creation of an adventurer who had climbed to fame upon the vicissitudes of an uncertain age, and who determined to leave behind him one permanent witness to his memory.

¹ Pontanus, *De Bello Neapolitano*. Cf. also Costanzo, iii. p. 268.

² *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 51.

Pius and Sigismondo were, however, from the first destined to be enemies. The relations between the Pope and the Vicar of an ecclesiastical fief were always delicate, and in this case they were complicated by external circumstances. As a Siennese, Pius could not forgive Sigismondo for his treachery to the Republic in 1454, when he undertook the defence of Siena against the Lord of Pitigliano, and then made peace without consulting his employers.¹ Sigismondo, on his side, had every reason to mistrust a suzerain who was hand in glove with his bitterest foes—the King of Naples, the Duke of Milan, and the Count of Urbino. The Lord of Rimini, moreover, despised persuasion as much as Pius disliked impetuosity, and thus personal antipathy arose to embitter the conflict.

The trouble began in the first year of Pius II's reign, when Sigismondo's fortresses were falling before the joint attack of Piccinino and the Count of Urbino, and the luckless Malatesta joined the Papal cortège on its way to Mantua, humbly seeking mediation from his overlord. For the moment, desire for peace triumphed over the Pope's antipathy, and he made at least an attempt to deal fairly by Sigismondo. Malatesta's cause was heard at Florence and again at Mantua, while Pius wrote himself to Count Federico, begging him to modify his terms. "You are victorious," he wrote, "and Sigismondo acknowledges you to be so; as worsted, he is ready to submit to terms. . . . Let not your rigour and obstinacy wrest from you your conquest."² Federico yielded to the Pope's pressure, and peace was made by which Sigismondo was forced to yield several fortresses to Urbino, and to surrender Sinigaglia and Mondavio to the Papacy, as pledges for payment of his debts to the King of Naples. Sigismondo, not unnaturally, considered that Pius had taken advantage of his position as mediator to gain possession of two coveted cities. Cir-

¹ Yriarte, *Un condottiere au 15^e siècle*, pp. 280-3.

² Pius II to Federico, Count of Urbino, 21 June 1459. Cf. Dennistoun, i. pp. 117-9.

cumstances forced him to accept the terms of the treaty, but he left Mantua vowing vengeance on the Pope.

During the troubled summer of 1460, Sigismondo saw his opportunity. Regardless of his pledges, he seized Mondavio, and proceeded to attack Sinigaglia. Pius retaliated by instituting formal proceedings against Malatesta as a heretic and a traitor, and in the following year Bartolomeo Vitelleschi, Bishop of Corneto, was sent into the Marches to reduce the rebel vassal to obedience. The chief result of the campaign was a triumphant victory for Malatesta at Nidastore on 2 July 1461. The Papal forces fled before Sigismondo's onset, leaving baggage, artillery, and the banner of S. Peter in the victor's hands.¹ There were few more critical moments in Pius II's reign. The Duke of Milan was lying at death's door, the Papal treasury was exhausted, and every day seemed to bring news of fresh victories for Anjou in Naples. Nevertheless, in dealing with Malatesta the Pope knew no hesitation. He continued to wage war on the miscreant, with weapons both temporal and spiritual, until Sigismondo was brought to his knees.

The strangest and most characteristic episode of the struggle was the burning of Malatesta's effigy, which took place in Rome early in the year 1462. It was the outward sign, Pius explained, of his condemnation to eternal punishment. The system of canonisation enabled the Pope to declare that certain of the departed were citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem and worthy of the veneration of the faithful. In the same way, it belonged to the Papal office to pronounce that notorious sinners had their place with Lucifer, in the city of the damned.² On Christmas Day 1460 the process began by a detailed accusation against Sigismondo on the part of the Fiscal Advocate. The Lord of Rimini, he declared, was guilty of "rapine, arson, murder, adultery, incest, parricide, sacrilege, treason and heresy," and it was the Pope's plain duty to purge Italy

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. v. pp. 141-2. Cf. Pastor, iii, p. 120.

² *Commentarii*, lib. v. p. 129.

of "so loathsome and abominable a monster."¹ Other tyrants of the Renaissance were as wicked as Sigismondo, but none took less trouble to conceal their wrongdoings. Tales of his open contempt for the ceremonies and laws of the Church, of the two wives whom he had murdered, and even of his schemes for bringing the Turk into Italy, were rife throughout the country. It is difficult for us to-day to separate fact from rumour, but there was sufficient evidence against Sigismondo to satisfy his judges. When Cardinal Cusa presented his report upon the investigation of the case, Malatesta was found guilty of all the crimes ascribed to him, and it only remained to put the sentence into execution. "Before the steps of the basilica of S. Peter a great pyre of dry materials was raised, and on the top of it was placed an effigy of Sigismondo, reproducing the features of the man, and indeed his very clothes, so that it seemed more like a real person than an effigy. And lest any should not recognise the effigy, a scroll came out of its mouth bearing the words, 'I am Sigismondo Malatesta . . . king of traitors, the enemy of God and man, by sentence of the Sacred College condemned to the flames.' Many read the writing; then, in the presence of the multitude, the pyre was kindled and immediately consumed the effigy."² The ceremony was repeated in another part of Rome with a duplicate effigy, the execution of the two figures being entrusted to the Papal architect, Paolo Romano.³ The spirit of the Renaissance demanded that even an effigy destined for the flames should be a work of art. Therefore Pius took care that it should be so, and Sigismondo doubtless appreciated the fact.

Meanwhile Sigismondo was hurling defiance at his judge. "I am advised that His Holiness has composed some verses against me," he wrote to the Duke of Milan.

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. v. p. 129.

² *Ibid.*, lib. vii. pp. 184-5.

³ Cf. Müntz, *Les Arts à la Cour des Papes*: "Hon viro magistro Paulo Mariani de Urbe Sculptori, florenos auri de camera 8 ebol. 48, pro totidem per eum expositis in conficiendis duabus imaginibus Sigismundi Malatesta ad camburendum."

"I must tell you that it is not in my nature to tolerate such things, even though His Holiness is my suzerain and I am his Vicar and servant. . . . When I am attacked with the pen, I attack with the pen. If I am opposed by the sword, I defend myself with the sword to the death, . . . a gallant death ennobles an entire life."¹ But the forces of the Papacy were more than a match for the rebel feudatory. On 12 August, when Sigismondo had just succeeded in recapturing Sinigaglia, Federico of Urbino appeared beneath its walls, and before dawn the next day Malatesta's army was scattered to the winds.² In the following year the fall of Fano set a seal upon the Pope's triumph. The city was gallantly defended by Roberto Malatesta, but, besieged both by land and sea, it surrendered on 25 September 1463, after nearly four months' resistance.³ Sinigaglia immediately gave herself to the Church, other strongholds followed suit, and in a short time Sigismondo's dominions were reduced to Rimini and its *contado*. Public opinion had felt for some time past that the Pope had gone far enough, and Milan, Venice, Florence, and even France, entreated him to stay his hand. But Pius was strangely obstinate. "It is not nobility that we hate," he wrote to the Count of Urbino, "but profligate and faithless nobles like himself (Sigismondo) . . . and we shall not neglect to chastise him as God may give us opportunity. You, and all such as imitate your ways, we love right heartily, and shall honour and exalt to the utmost of our power, . . . knowing well that authority is best maintained by punishments and rewards, and that in the opinion of all the world Sigismondo has earned the former, and you the latter."⁴ At last the Pope realised that his tenacity with regard to Sigismondo accorded ill with his exhorta-

¹ Sigismondo Malatesta to Francesco Sforza, Rimini, 26 March 1462 (Pastor, Appendix 56. From *Archivio di Stato*, Milano).

² Cf. Dennistoun, i. p. 136, and *Commentarii*, lib. x. p. 259.

³ *Commentarii*, lib. xii. pp. 319 and 342.

⁴ Pius II to Federico of Urbino, 6 Oct. 1462 (Muzio, *Historia dei fatti di Federico, Duca di Urbino*, pp. 217-9).

tions of peace, and in October 1463 the conditions of pardon were made and accepted. All the Malatesta dominions were declared forfeit to the Holy See, and Sigismondo was ordered to fast every Friday on bread and water for the remainder of his life. After his envoys had made public confession and recantation of his heresies in Rome, the sentence of excommunication was removed, and Rimini and Cesena were granted afresh to Sigismondo and his brother Novello, in return for a large annual tribute. Finally, the Bishop of Sessa was sent to Rimini to raise the interdict. Three days of fasting and penance were imposed upon the whole community, and at the end of that time Sigismondo, on his knees before the Bishop in the crowded Cathedral, received absolution and benediction for himself and his subjects.¹ A few months later the vanquished rebel left Italy for the East in the service of Venice.

It was during the Pope's sojourn at Siena, on his way back from the Congress of Mantua, that he heard both of the Angevin victory at Sarno and of the rebellion of Malatesta. "Misfortunes seldom comê singly," as Pius observed, and at the same time the news from Rome was such as to cause him the gravest anxiety.² A band of some three hundred riotous youths, under the leadership of Tiburzio and Valeriano de' Maso, made Rome ring with the tale of their robberies and outrages, and instituted a reign of terror with which the magistrates were quite unable to cope. The barons of the Campagna made common cause with these turbulent spirits, and Jacopo Savelli's stronghold at Palombara became the headquarters of the whole band. In the course of the summer one of the rioters, appropriately named Innamorato, was arrested for kidnapping a girl on her way to her wedding. Thereupon his companions fortified themselves in the Pantheon, and held it during a nine days' siege, being supplied with food by the terror-stricken neighbours, who feared to deny them what they asked. Finally, the magistrates weakly yielded

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. xii. pp. 344-5.

² *Ibid.*, lib. iv. p. 106.

up Innamorato in exchange for some citizens whom the rioters had captured. After this episode "Tiburzio was lord of all, and everything hung upon his will."¹ As the son of Angelo de' Maso, who had been executed for his share in the Porcaro conspiracy ten years earlier, he posed as the champion of Republicanism, and swore to deliver Rome from the yoke of the priests. After some weeks of virtual dictatorship, Tiburzio graciously acceded to the request of the magistrates that he should withdraw to Palombara. He left the city amid every sign of pomp, and with the knowledge that he could return when it suited him.

From Rome and the Campagna the insurrection spread outwards until it merged in the larger problem of the Neapolitan war. In September, Piccinino appeared in the Sabina, where he was welcomed by all the elements of opposition to the Papacy. Jacopo Savelli provided quarters for his troops, and the anti-Papal party in Tivoli all but succeeded in delivering the city into his hands. The capture of a certain Luca da Tozio, an emissary of Cardinal Colonna, revealed a widespread conspiracy against the Pope. The Prince of Taranto, Everso of Anguillara, Jacopo Savelli, and the Colonna had combined to bring Piccinino into the Campagna. Tiburzio would open the gates of Rome to him, and the Papal government would be at his mercy.² Up to this time Pius had disregarded the entreaties of the magistrates that he should return to Rome, but now he resolved to delay no longer. The Cardinals feared that he would fall into Piccinino's clutches, but the Pope remembered Eugenius IV's nine years' exile, and determined to enter Rome while it was still possible.

On 6 October the news spread that the Pope was in the neighbourhood, and the Senator of Rome, Cardinal Tebaldo, and some of the nobility rode out to welcome his return. They found Pius picnicking by a fountain in a shady grove. He had spent the previous night at the village of Formello,

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. iv. pp. 106-7.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 108-9.

where the accommodation had been primitive, and he was enjoying an *al fresco* meal in order to make up for his scanty supper. The new-comers were pressed to join the feast, and then the whole party set out for Rome. Pius, with habitual good fortune, had chosen exactly the right moment for his return. The fickle youth of the city had grown weary of excesses, and a band of Tiburzio's followers came six miles out of Rome to beg the privilege of carrying the returning Pontiff into his capital. The Pope's companions trembled when they saw these unruly youths raising the Papal litter to their shoulders, but Pius smiled at their fears: "Thou shalt walk on the asp and the basilisk, and tread under foot the lion and the dragon," he quoted. "What wild beast is more savage than man? . . . Yet the fiercest natures often grow gentle. These youths were prepared to take from us our life and our city, but now they know their error, and bear on their shoulders him whom they sought to trample under their feet."¹ The same month saw the end of Tiburzio's career. Another of his band, a certain Bonanno Specchio, having fallen into the hands of the police, Tiburzio came to Rome, with fifteen companions, and endeavoured to repeat the *Innamorato* episode. But his transient popularity had vanished, and he failed to create any movement in his favour. The rebels fled for refuge to the grass and scrub outside the walls, where the Papal troops hunted them down with dogs until the ringleaders were captured. On 31 October Tiburzio and seven others were hanged in the Capitol. Within a year, this outbreak of hooliganism, masquerading in the guise of a Republican movement, was over and forgotten.

In 1461, Federico of Urbino undertook a campaign in the Sabina which did much to restore order in the Papal dominions round Rome. Three new canons, named after the Pope and his parents, Silvia, Vittoria, and Enea, were employed in the war, and the Pope prided himself that they

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. iv. pp. 115-6.

were largely responsible for the success of the campaign.¹ Jacopo Savelli, the arch-rebel of the barons, was besieged in Palombara, and in July he humbly sought peace of the Pope. He was pardoned upon easy conditions, and his submission put an end to the Pope's worst difficulties. "Words fail me to describe," wrote Otto Carretto, "what joy and delight this matter has brought to the whole city and Curia."²

The Neapolitan war, the subjugation of Malatesta, and the suppression of Tiburzio's rebellion are the three outstanding events of Pius II's reign in Italy. Yet his success as ruler of the States of the Church does not rest upon these victories alone. It may even be said that, in all three episodes, fortune rather than any peculiar display of ability on Pius II's part turned the scales in his favour. The unique feature of his rule, and the clue to his successful government, lies in the intimate knowledge of his dominions which he gained by his constant expeditions to all parts of the Papal States. The inhabitants of many a rebellious city and of many a remote village had looked upon the Pope merely as some far-off recipient of taxes until they gained a new conception of their suzerain from the kindly little old man, with his genial manners and simple habits, who had spent some pleasant days among them. The Pope's detractors grumbled at these constant holidays, and complained that the Papal business was neglected. But in Italy, where the personal relation is all supreme, Pius II's progresses among his people bound the Papal States together in a way that hours of toil with his secretaries at the Vatican could never have accomplished.

During the Pope's visits to the cities of his dominions, he was often called upon to play the part of peacemaker. His efforts to mediate between contending factions at Perugia had little permanent effect, but in other places he

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. v. p. 135.

² Otto Carretto to Francesco Sforza, 11 July 1461 (Pastor, Appendix 49, from *Archivio di Stato*, Milano).

was more successful. His dealings with Orvieto, in particular, are an illustration of the good influence which a wise and tactful Pope could have over the distracted Republics which acknowledged the Papal suzerainty. As soon as the fact that Pius had left Mantua was known in Orvieto, the citizens began to look forward to a visit from their over-lord on his way back to Rome.¹ It was resolved to pave the way for his coming by a complimentary embassy. As a preliminary step, a general day's hunting was proclaimed, and every citizen, from the magistrates of the Republic to the humblest peasant, turned out at the sound of the horn to take his share in providing a present for the Pope. The result of the chase was that an embassy from Orvieto appeared before Pius II at Siena, armed with some hundred head of game and a varied list of petitions. The Pope was asked, among other things, to allow some Jewish money-lenders to settle in Orvieto, to repair the hall of the Papal palace, and to reduce the salt-tax. Evil reports had already reached Pius of the feuds between the Muffati and the Melcorini which destroyed the peace of Orvieto. He now saw his opportunity to end the war, and the envoys were sent away happy, with the assurance that their petitions should be granted, and that the Pope would visit their city in the course of the year. On 27 September 1460 the great day arrived, and Pius was welcomed at the gates of Orvieto by crowds of children waving olive-branches and shouting, "*Pio! Pace!*" Before entering the city he made the sign of the cross over it, in order to exorcise the evil spirit of sedition with the Papal blessing.² He remained for three days in the Papal palace, full of admiration for the splendid city rising out of the valley upon its rocky precipices. "Here," he says, "were most noble houses and vast palaces, but age has consumed much, while civil strife has burned and destroyed still

¹ Fumi, *Pio II e la pace di Orvieto* (*Studi e documenti di storia e diritto*, Anno vi., Roma, 1885).

² *Commentarii*, lib. iv. p. III.

more. Now there are only half-ruined towers and fallen temples. But the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary stands unspoilt in the midst of the town, unrivalled by any Church in Italy. . . . The façade . . . is adorned with statues fashioned by excellent sculptors (the greater part of them Sienese),¹ who are not inferior to Phidias or Praxiteles. In the white marble figures of men and animals art seems to rival nature; only a voice is needed to make them alive. And there may be seen the resurrection of the dead, the judgment of the Saviour, the pains of the damned, and the reward of the elect, as if these events were really happening.”² Pius, with unerring artistic instinct, has seized upon the peculiar glory of the Orvieto façade, but even while he rejoiced over its beauty he laboured in the cause of peace. He preached in the Cathedral, and gave separate addresses to the boys and girls of the city, all with a view to ending civil strife. Before the Pope left Orvieto the citizens were determined to lay aside their feuds. In the following December, Muffati and Melcorini made peace in the presence of the Papal Governor, and a month later a new government, known as the *Stato Ecclesiastico*, was set up.³ It was composed of representatives of all parties in the city, and by this means the “diabolical factions” were extinguished. In the course of the year 1461 Papal troops aided the citizens to rid themselves of a would-be tyrant, Gentile della Sala, who had endeavoured to create a revolution in Orvieto for his own ends. Gentile surrendered at discretion to the Pope, who spared his life and lands, but banished him to North Italy.⁴ With Gentile’s departure Orvieto was at the end of her troubles.

¹ The Sienese architect Lorenzo Maitani, *capo maestro* of the works at Orvieto 1310-30, is now commonly admitted to have designed the façade, although the prevalence of the Florentine spirit in the reliefs points to the influence of such men as Andrea and Nino Pisano. Pius II naturally takes the Sienese view of this vexed question. Cf. Waters, *Italian Sculptors*, pp. 117-20.

² *Commentarii*, lib. iv. p. 111.

³ Fumi, *op. cit.*, pp. 261-4.

⁴ *Commentarii*, lib. iv. p. 112.

"Nothing is more dear to our heart," wrote Pius in his letter of congratulation, "than to know that our subjects live in peace and tranquillity."¹

In 1461 Pius passed his *villegiatura* at Tivoli, a politic move on his part, in view of the recent disturbances in the city. Some of the citizens who had tried to deliver Tivoli to Piccinino fled on the news of the Pope's coming, but those who remained received a free pardon together with a fatherly lecture upon the error of their ways.² As a guarantee against future trouble Pius caused a fortress to be built in the highest part of the city. This great stronghold with its twin towers, adorned with the arms of Pius II, remains as a permanent memorial of the Pope's sojourn in Tivoli.³ Before returning to Rome, Pius made an expedition to Subiaco. As he travelled up the Aniene valley, he was charmed by the countless sparkling streams which flowed into the river. "The Pope ordered dinner to be prepared on the journey, at a place where a clear fountain gushed out. . . . Here the Pope and Cardinals dined, quenching their thirst at the stream. The ice-cold water tasted sweeter than wine. The people assembled near the fountain were invited to share the feast, although a great crowd had come from the surrounding villages to see the Pope. After dinner, the peasants plunged into the water to catch fish for the Pope's entertainment. He watched the fishers from the bank as he proceeded on his way, and at every capture they saluted him with a loud shout, and handed the trout to the Papal servants. Thus the greater part of the journey passed in the pleasantest manner."⁴ This, and other episodes of the kind, so naïvely described in the *Commentaries*, caused the name of Pius II to be cherished among the inhabitants of an entire countryside.

¹ Fumi, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

² *Commentarii*, lib. v. p. 136.

³ The following inscription is preserved on the gateway :—

"Grata bonis, invisa malis, inimica superbis
Sum tibi, Tybur, enim sic Pius instituit."

⁴ *Commentarii*, lib. vi. p. 167.

The year 1462 was the golden year of Pius II's sojourn in Tuscany, when he lingered on the slopes of Monte Amiata, and watched Pienza rise into being upon the opposite hill-side. But his journeys to and from Tuscany formed the occasion for another leisurely progress through the Papal States. The Feast of Corpus Christi was spent amid much pageantry at Viterbo, and, on the Lake of Bolsena, Pius watched the boat-races, which he describes with enthusiasm worthy of a competitor in the struggle.¹ On the return journey the Pope stayed at Todi, where once more he was able to introduce a settled government in the place of anarchy and misrule. He found the citizens groaning under the yoke of Jacopo and Andrea Atti, members of a powerful and wealthy family, who had usurped authority in Todi. The Pope and Cardinals instituted an inquiry into the doings of these brothers, with the result that Jacopo, the principal offender, was banished from the city. The chief magistracy of Todi was composed of Priors elected by lot every two months, from names previously placed in the election-boxes. Now, under Pius II's auspices, the magistracy was purged of undesirable elements by the usual Italian practice of refilling the election-boxes. At the same time, "various other salutary laws were given to the city, which have sufficed unto this day to maintain peace."²

Pius was an enthusiastic builder, but his energies were mainly directed towards the glorification of Pienza. His chief works in Rome were a tribune, from which the Pope could bless the people outside S. Peter's, and the beautiful Chapel of S. Andrew in the left aisle of the ancient Church. With the rebuilding of S. Peter's both these memorials of Pius II were swept away. For the rest, his building operations, as well as his general policy, found their origin in his travels through the Papal States. The new harbour at Corneto, the walls of Civita Vecchia, and the restorations at Assisi and Orvieto, are alike the outcome of the Pope's

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. viii. pp. 208-14.

² *Ibid.*, lib. x. pp. 270-1.

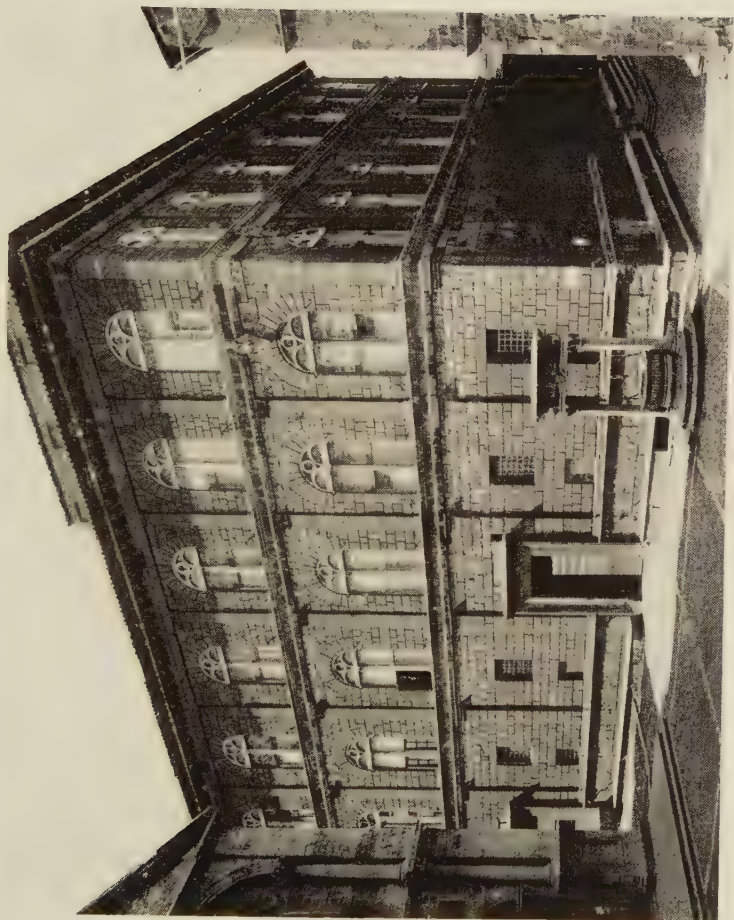
intimate knowledge of the needs of his dominions. Above all he took pains to be an effective guardian of the antiquities of the Papal States. As the Pope was returning along the Via Appia from one of his many excursions, he saw to his horror a man digging great blocks of stone out of the way, in order to use them for building a house. He sent at once to the lord of the district, a member of the Colonna family, and bade him see that the Via Appia was left untouched, as it was under the protection of the Papacy.¹ In 1462 he issued a Bull forbidding injury to any ancient monument in his dominions, and reserving to himself the right of attending to necessary repairs.² Later generations would have had cause to rejoice if other guardians of Rome had been as zealous as Pius II.

As ruler of the Papal States, Pius showed himself a true Guelf. To the cities he was a benevolent suzerain, caring for their interests and respecting their liberties, but he waged war on the nobility. Sigismondo Malatesta, Gentile della Sala, and Jacopo Savelli were not the only feudatories who felt the weight of his hand. An object of his peculiar aversion was Everso, Count of Anguillara, a petty lord of the Campagna, of whom he has left a vivid if unpleasing portrait. "To Everso nothing was sweeter than rapine, he was skilled in arms, and made war upon his relations and friends as readily as upon his enemies. He was always at enmity with his suzerain the Pope; . . . he despised religion, saying that the world was governed by chance, and that the souls of men and animals alike were mortal. He was blasphemous and cruel, and thought no more of killing a man than a beast. He invented new and horrible tortures for his prisoners. He forced his troops to live by plunder and robbery, and compelled the peasants to work for him on Sundays. It was the Lord's Day, he said, and he was their Lord."³ The Count

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. xi. p. 308.

² Lesca, p. 226 ; Pastor, iii. p. 304.

³ *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 39, and Cugnoni, p. 190.



PALAZZO PICCOLOMINI
PIENZA

of Anguillara was implicated in every movement against Pius II, but he contrived, apparently, to escape punishment. He is last mentioned in the *Commentaries* in 1463, when he was frustrated in an attempt to kill the Pope by soaking his saddle in poison.¹

Both in his scepticism and his barbarities, Everso is a lesser example of the type of Sigismondo Malatesta. He stood for lawlessness, brute force, and feudal independence, and from vassals such as he, Pius was determined to purge his dominions. In their place he substituted for the most part his own relations. The system of nepotism was already in vogue before Pius ascended the throne of S. Peter, but under him it became an established feature of Papal policy. Antonio Piccolomini takes a prominent place in the long line of Papal nephews which culminated in Cæsar Borgia. His fortunes were made in the Neapolitan war, several of the forfeited Malatesta fiefs fell to his share, and he was brought forward on every possible occasion. Yet Pius was too tenacious of his rights to allow even a favourite nephew to usurp his authority, and he cannot fairly be accused of subordinating the interests of the Papacy to those of his family. Antonio and the numerous Piccolomini who held the fiefs and manned the fortresses of the Church were a source of strength and not of weakness to the Papacy. Nepotism was used by Pius II as a means of supplying a non-military power with its chief requisite, loyal and efficient captains.

In an age when every Papal Vicar struggled to make himself a sovereign prince, and when the Papacy still reaped the fruits of its long exile from Italy, the Pope's task as a territorial ruler was by no means light. Pius II, in the face of many difficulties, went far towards establishing an effective control over his dominions. At his death in 1464 he left the States of the Church more loyal, more united, and better governed than he found them.

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. xi. p. 305.

CHAPTER X

PIUS II AND EUROPE

PIUS II's relations with the powers of Europe gave scope for the exercise of his peculiar talents. Embassies came to Rome, and whether or no the results of their mission proved satisfactory, one and all departed lost in admiration at the wise and eloquent orations which fell from the Holy Father's lips. Papal Bulls sped hither and thither, couched in the well-turned, incisive phrases which were associated with the name of Æneas Silvius. In the various problems which called for solution the Pope always had some personal knowledge to bring to bear upon the subject, the fruit of his long apprenticeship in European diplomacy and of his insatiable curiosity with regard to the men and movements which crossed his path. Thus here, as in every phase of Pius II's career, it is the personal interest which predominates. The tedious and somewhat profitless negotiations which mark his activity as the arbiter of Europe are chiefly interesting to-day as the means by which he gave expression to his individuality. At the same time, his achievements in the sphere of European politics afford a valuable object-lesson as to the true position of the restored Papacy. A modern, Italianised Papal monarchy had emerged from the confusion of the previous generation. What part would this new phenomenon play among the nations of Europe? Would the spiritual supremacy of the mediæval Papacy again become a reality? Such were the questions which called for solution when Pius II succeeded to the traditional

leadership of Christendom, and set himself to shape the destinies of Europe with the instruments that had proved successful in the fashioning of his own career.

I. FRANCE

As the spiritual sovereign of Europe, Pius II had a threefold task to perform. The removal of the Pragmatic Sanction in France, the reconciliation of Bohemia with the Catholic Church, and the restoration of order in Germany by means of a reassertion of Papal authority, never ceased to occupy his attention. Upon these three objects turned the diplomacy of the Curia throughout his reign. With regard to France, the gauntlet was thrown down at Mantua, when Pius, in the presence of the admiring Cardinals, spoke strong words concerning the wrong done to the authority of the Holy See by the conditions which prevailed in the Gallican Church.¹ The Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges dated from the year 1438, when the French king, feeling that he had little concern in the quarrel between Pope and Council, resolved to deal practically with the situation and to adopt by royal authority such of the Basel decrees as seemed to meet the needs of his country.² The Papal rights with regard to ecclesiastical appointments, annates, and appeals were either restricted or denied, and the doctrines of the Conciliar movement concerning the superiority and frequency of General Councils were embodied in the document. The whole tenor of the Pragmatic Sanction made it a perpetual source of annoyance to the restored Papacy, and it was by no means surprising that the author of the Bull *Execrabilis* should at once single it out for attack.

Charles VII promptly took up the challenge. He caused a formal protest to be registered against the Pope's Mantuan policy, bidding him beware of meddling with the Conciliar

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 87. Cf. pp. 176-8, above.

² Cf. pp. 69-70, above.

decrees, and offering his protection to any future Council which might meet in France. Allusion was also made to the Pope's championship of Ferrante, in terms which were the reverse of courteous. "The Holy Father," ran the protest, "also spoke in favour of the party opposed to King René, saying much in praise of the Bastard that he would have done far better to keep to himself."¹ The envoys sent to negotiate with Charles VII about the Crusade were kept for months without an answer,² and the presence of Pius II's arch-enemy, Gregory Heimburg, at the French Court was further proof of the King's hostility.

Nevertheless, from the point of view of the French monarchy, the desirability of maintaining the Pragmatic Sanction was at least an open question. Freedom of election left the Cathedral Chapters at the mercy of anyone strong enough to influence them, and the King found his share of patronage exposed to constant encroachments from the great nobles. Questions of jurisdiction had now to be fought out with the *Parlement* and the University of Paris, and these bodies proved no whit less tenacious than the Roman Curia. The French Church was, in short, still exploited, but the fact that the spoilers were Frenchmen and not Italians made the Pragmatic Sanction acceptable to the nation in spite of its abuses. Yet to a King whose chief aim was to strengthen the royal authority, it seemed even more dangerous to share his control of the Church with his own subjects than with the Papacy. Such was the view of the question which presented itself to the Dauphin Louis. He at once ranged himself on the side of Pius II, and entered on negotiations with Rome with an

¹ Pithou, *Preuves des libertez de l'Église Gallicane*, vol. ii. pp. 289-95. M. Joannis Dauvet Procuratoris generalis protestatio nullitatis et appellatio ad futuram Concilium contra Orationem Pii II Pontificis, habitam in Conventu Mantuano, comminates ejusdem et censuras publicatas in Carolum VII Regem Francorum, 1460.

² Cf. Pius II to Charles VII, March 1460. Quoted by Pastor, Appendix 38, from *Archivio Segreto del Vaticano*.

enthusiasm bred of the knowledge that he was opposing his father's policy.

When in July 1461 the Dauphin became King Louis XI, he at once signified his intention of keeping his promises, and Pius addressed a warm letter of congratulation and encouragement to the new monarch. The letter contains the following significant sentence: "If your prelates and the University desire anything of us, let them approach us through your mediation; for no Pope has ever loved the French nation more than ourselves, and we will refuse no request that can honestly be granted."¹ It was clear that Louis XI regarded the alliance with the Papacy as a means of bringing the Gallican Church under his heel, and that Pius was prepared to show his gratitude in a material form. When in December the names of six new Cardinals were published, those of two Frenchmen—Jouffroy, Bishop of Arras, and Louis d'Albret—were among the number. Just at this time came Louis XI's letter to the Pope announcing that the Pragmatic Sanction was abolished.² With tears of joy Pius told the news to his Consistory, and all hailed it as a signal triumph for the restored Papacy. "It is the greatest news that could come to the Apostolic See," wrote Goro Lolli to the Sienese Republic. "In one moment the Papacy has gained the Kingdom of France and has won the full obedience of all Christians. God be praised that during the reign of a Sienese Pope Holy Church should be thus exalted. And," adds the practical son of Siena, "it will be of no small advantage to our own city, for those who seek the Curia will double the number of travellers passing through our territories."³

The exultant Pope addressed an autograph letter to Louis XI, praising him for his noble action which showed him to be "a true scion of the Franks, and Most Christian

¹ Pius II to Louis XI, Rome, 25 Oct. 1461 (Ep. 387, *Opera*, p. 861).

² Louis XI to Pius II, 27 Nov. 1461 (Ep. 388, *Opera*, p. 863).

³ Gregorio Lolli to Siena, 26 Dec. 1461 (Pastor, Appendix 53, from *Archivio di Stato*, Siena).

King.”¹ With it he sent a consecrated sword engraved with an elegant verse of his own composition inciting the French monarch to war against the Turk.² It seemed, indeed, as if Pius in a few short months had won all for which his predecessors, from Eugenius onwards, had pleaded in vain. The year ended in a glow of satisfaction with regard to the French question. Yet 1462 had hardly dawned before it transpired that Pius II’s difficulties had begun rather than ended with the abolition of the Pragmatic Sanction.

From the time that Louis as Dauphin opened negotiations with the Papacy, his intermediary was the Burgundian Bishop of Arras, whose chief concern throughout had been to obtain a Cardinal’s hat. “When Arras knew that he had sailed into port, and that there was no more uncertainty about the coveted honour, he began to write of Louis’s intentions with regard to Naples, a subject upon which he had hitherto kept silence.”³ The upshot of his letters was that Louis had constituted himself the champion of René, and that he counted upon a complete reversal of the Papal policy in Naples. “By this means the King’s wishes would be satisfied, and the Pragmatic Sanction would certainly be revoked.”

Shaken by the strength of the Angevin party in the Curia, harassed by threats of a General Council, and of direct intervention in Italy on the part of the French crown, Pius II passed, as we have seen, through his worst fit of irresolution with regard to his Neapolitan policy.⁴ Had it not been for the earnest representations of the Milanese ambassador, it seems probable that he would have succumbed to the pressure of France and abandoned

¹ Pius II to Louis XI, 13 Jan. 1462, “manu propria” (Ep. 27, ed. Medioli.).

² *Commentarii*, lib. vii. p. 184—

“Exerat in Turcas tua me Ludovic furentes
Dextera : Graiorum sanguinis ulta ero,
Corruet imperium Maumethis, et inclyta rursus
Gallorum virtus, te petet astra duce.”

³ *Commentarii*, lib. vii. p. 186.

⁴ Cf. above, pp. 188–9.

Ferrante to his fate. But when he received the French embassy, which came to Rome in March 1462 to make formal surrender of the Pragmatic Sanction, the Pope had recovered from his panic. To the splendid offers of all that the French King would do for the Crusade once his cousin of Anjou reigned in Naples, the Pope replied "so sweetly, so eloquently, and so persuasively that the whole public Consistory was amazed."¹ The Sienese ambassador describes the oration as "something so glorious that it seemed divine rather than human."² Yet he was forced to admit that this oratorical triumph had only been achieved by omitting all reference to two subjects of paramount importance—the demands of the French King with regard to Naples and Genoa. From the point of view of the French envoys, the matter looked very different. When, after weeks of negotiation, they passed through Florence on their return journey, they summed up the situation in terms which augured ill for the future. "They said, in effect, that the Pope had given them many words, but no good deeds."³

The embassy of 1462 was followed by a long correspondence between Pius and Louis XI, in which the latter tried by varying means to lure the Pope to the side of Anjou, while the former employed his literary talents in parrying the attacks of the French King. In the earlier stages of the duel, Louis adopted the method of concession. He performed an act of restitution in surrendering to the Papacy the Counties of Dié and Valence on the eastern bank of the Rhone.⁴ He also proposed a marriage between his daughter and Antonio Piccolomini shortly after the latter had wedded his Aragonese bride. On the

¹ B. Riverius, *Report* (Pastor, p. 150, from *Archivio di Stato*, Milano).

² L. Petronius to Siena, Rome, 17 March 1462 (Pastor, Appendix 55, from *Archivio di Stato*, Siena).

³ N. da Pontremoli to Francesco Sforza, Florence, 9 April 1462 (Pastor, p. 153, from *Archivio di Stato*, Milano).

⁴ Raynaldus, *Annales*, 1462, Nos. 11-13.

news that Antonio was already provided for, he heaped reproaches upon the Pope for having sold himself to the Aragonese. Pius, however, replied in his most urbane manner that he had followed his usual practice with regard to his young relations, and had left the choice of a wife entirely in Antonio's own hands.¹

When the departure of John of Calabria from Naples sealed the failure of Anjou, Louis let his fury break loose, and concession was abandoned for something like open hostility. The cause of his anger lay less in any concern for the fortunes of his cousins than in the feeling that he had been outwitted. He had thought to make the Pope his grateful servant by surrendering the Pragmatic Sanction. Neapolitan affairs had taught him his mistake, and he determined to rob Pius II of the fruits of his victory before it was too late. In the summer of 1462 the Seneschal of Toulouse visited the Pope at Viterbo, and delivered a threatening message to the effect that, if Pius did not mend his ways, the French Cardinals would be recalled from the Curia. This was one of the comparatively rare occasions on which Pius lost his temper, and the diatribe which he poured forth upon the French nation in general, and its representatives at the Curia in particular, did not tend towards pacification. "Let them go, if they please," he retorted; "the Curia will not be brought to ruin on that account. On the contrary, it will be repaired. Avarice, simony, luxury, and ambition will go with them, and all evil practices will cease with their departure. . . . Blessed is the Pope who has no Gauls at his Court. . . . Every day we have contended with them and their improper and dishonest demands. Let them go; let them betake themselves afar. Then once more we may live peaceably and devoutly."² After this episode it is not surprising to hear of Louis writing a letter "unworthy of his dignity, and as though he were the Pope's superior,"

¹ Pius II to Louis XI, Viterbo, 10 May 1462 (Ep. 33, Mediol.).

² Cugnoni, p. 220 (omitted from *Commentarii*, viii. p. 202).

in which he "condemned the works of the supreme Pontiff, and prescribed for him rules of conduct." ¹

Meanwhile, feeling on the ecclesiastical problem in France ran high. The students of the University found vent for their indignation by performing a play in which rats were seen devouring the seals of the Pragmatic Sanction, and then receiving red hats. Every question of jurisdiction, every appointment in the Gallican Church, gave occasion for a struggle between the Pope and either the University or the Crown. Finally, the year 1463 introduced a fresh stage of the conflict, and Louis deliberately set himself to neutralise the surrender of the Pragmatic Sanction. By a series of decrees, designed to defend the French nation against "the aggressions of Rome" and to restore "the ancient Gallican liberties," the Papacy was deprived of much of the practical advantage which it had gained by the restoration of obedience. "The King did not show himself so religious by the abolition of the Pragmatic Sanction as he showed himself sacrilegious by issuing such decrees," ² is Pius II's comment on the situation. In the same year the Cardinal of Arras left Rome, to become as zealous a promoter of Louis XI's anti-Papal policy as he had once been of his alliance with the Pope. Meanwhile the French King opened negotiations with Pius II's enemies in Germany, and even went so far as to coquet with George of Bohemia's darling scheme of a secular Crusade against the Turk.

Thus the relations between France and the Papacy at the end of Pius II's reign were hardly less strained than they had been at the beginning. The most that could be said was that formal obedience had been restored; the obnoxious name of Pragmatic Sanction was no more, and it remained for successive kings to render the anti-Papal decrees more or less operative as seemed best to meet the political exigencies of the moment. From first to last the question of the Gallican Church had been

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. xii. pp. 323-4.

² *Ibid.*, p. 324.

treated from the point of view of politics. On the accession of Louis XI the political situation was favourable to an understanding with the Papacy, and Pius, like a clever diplomatist, had seized the propitious moment to secure his brief triumph. He made the most of his opportunity while it lasted, so far as he could do so without sacrifice of his Italian policy. But now France had nothing more to gain from friendship with Rome. The political tide had set in a contrary direction, and the Pope was powerless to stem it.

II. BOHEMIA

Pius II's treatment of the Bohemian problem forms perhaps the most disappointing episode in the history of his dealings with Europe. At the time of his accession, the question seemed ripe for settlement, and Pius the man of all others fitted to bring about a satisfactory solution. George Podiebrad, who had been chosen King of Bohemia after the death of Ladislas Postumus, was, for his part, sincerely desirous of a reconciliation with Rome. He was, as Æneas said of him, a prey to political ambition rather than to theological error,¹ and recognition by Rome seemed to him the only means of securing the allegiance of his Catholic subjects. On 7 May 1458 he had been crowned by two Catholic Bishops, acting with the consent of Calixtus III, and he had sworn to them in secret to do his utmost to restore his people to the faith and discipline of the Catholic Church. He was, in short, prepared to accept any compromise that would remove the taint of heresy from his kingdom, and at the same time satisfy the mass of his subjects who clung to Utraquism as the symbol of their faith and of their nationality. Pius II, on his side, fully appreciated the difficulties of the situation. Only three years before his accession he pleaded for the recognition of the Compacts

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. i, p. 18,

as the one hope of bringing back Bohemia to the fold,¹ while his knowledge of the Bohemian people naturally inclined him to deal sympathetically with the religious question. It seemed as if Pope and King were ready to work together for a common end, and that their efforts would be crowned with success. Yet this apparent unanimity concealed a fundamental flaw which accounted for all subsequent failure. Both Pope and King desired the reconciliation of Bohemia with the Church, but each of them regarded it as a means to an end, and worked for it only in so far as it served his ultimate object. George's aim was to rule over a loyal and united people; therefore a reconciliation with Rome which alienated his Hussite subjects had no attractions for him. Pius sought to re-establish the Papal supremacy over an undivided Christendom; therefore he was not prepared to give peace to Bohemia at the cost of countenancing national separatism in matters ecclesiastical. Neither Pope nor King had any illusions about the dilemma in which they found themselves. George knew that Rome would not accept any compromise that would satisfy the Hussites. Pius, as his earlier advocacy of the Compacts showed, realised that Bohemia could only be won by recognising her peculiar rites. Each, however, relied on his own diplomatic gifts to steer him through the difficulty. It was, in fact, a struggle of wits between two well-matched combatants.

The negotiations which followed Pius II's accession were entirely harmonious. When the Bohemian envoys came to proffer their obedience to the Pope at Siena, he refused to recognise George as King until he had made public profession of orthodoxy. But Pius could not remain obdurate in the face of Podiebrad's lavish offers of support against the Turk, and the letter inviting ambassadors to attend the Congress of Mantua spoke of "our dear son

¹ Cf. *Oratio habita coram Calixto III de Compactatis Bohemorum*, 1455 (*Pii II Orationes*, Mansi, vol. i. p. 352).

in Christ the King of the Bohemians.”¹ On George’s reply that he could do nothing to further either the Crusade or the question of reunion until he was lord over all his people, Pius sent envoys to Bohemia who did much to secure George’s recognition by his Catholic subjects. Even the fiery Catholics of Breslau consented to a three years’ truce, on the expiration of which they would do homage to their King as “a true and undoubted Catholic.” This truce (13 January 1460) evoked general rejoicing. George was loud in his expressions of gratitude, and Pius looked forward to the speedy arrival of an embassy which would bring the affair of Bohemia to a triumphant conclusion.²

The embassy, like others of its kind, was long in coming, and it was not until March 1462 that the Bohemians entered Rome, headed by Pius II’s old friend, Procopius von Rabstein, and a Hussite noble, Sdenek Kostka of Postupic. In the two years’ interval the course of events, both in Bohemia and Rome, had placed fresh obstacles in the way of reconciliation. Complaints had come from Breslau that the recent edicts of Rokycana, the Hussite Archbishop of Prag, were forcing good Catholics either to accept the chalice or to leave the country.³ At the same time, George’s friendly relations with the Papacy had so alarmed the Hussites that they required their King to give a solemn promise to stand by the Compacts. Procopius stated the dilemma fairly enough when he explained to Bessarion that George was lord over two kinds of people in Bohemia, and that it was impossible for him to favour one party without shaking the loyalty of the other.⁴ As to Pius, he had already grown suspicious of the good faith of his “beloved son.” “He is half a heretic, a deceiver from

¹ Pius II to Procopius von Rabstein, Mantua, 12 June 1459 (Pastor, Appendix 16, from *Archivio Segreto del Vaticano*).

² Cf. Pius II to Carvajal, Siena, 12 March 1460 (Raynaldus, 1460, No. 92); and Voigt, iii. pp. 448–51.

³ Cf. Voigt, vol. iii. p. 452.

⁴ Palacky, *Geschichte von Böhmen*, Bd. iv. (2), p. 220.

his cradle, and is not to be trusted,"¹ he told the Milanese ambassador. Moreover, the worst crises of Pius II's reign were over with the year 1461. Both at home and abroad the position of the Papacy was improving. In the very week that the Bohemians arrived in Rome, the French embassy came to surrender the Pragmatic Sanction. It was not a time to make concessions. The shining example of the French King was held up before the Bohemians, and, in an interview with Procopius, Cardinal Bessarion pointed out that the effect of Louis XI's obedience had been to give him full control over the Church in his realm. "Your King," he added, "has only to act in a like manner to receive a like reward."²

On 20 March the Bohemians had their first public audience with the Pope. After the customary proffer of obedience, the Hussites petitioned for the confirmation of the Compacts, and Pius, in a two hours' oration, pointed out the misery and confusion which they had brought to Bohemia. It was not, he said, a case of confirming them but of setting them aside.³ Various other conferences followed, which must have reminded Pius very forcibly of the proceedings which he witnessed in his youth at Basel. Then as now the Hussites came to argue as equals, or rather as those who had been singled out by Divine favour for special enlightenment. Pius, as the Council before him, was prepared to pass judgment as a superior, and to treat the Compacts, which the Hussites regarded as their inviolable right, as a purely temporary concession. According to the Pope's view of the matter, the time for concession was over, and in the final audience on 31 March he made clear his position.⁴ The Compacts had been broken repeatedly by the Hussites; they had offended the Bohemian Catholics, they had encouraged heretical beliefs, they had impeded friendly relations between Bohemia and her

¹ D. Carretto to Francesco Sforza, 12 March 1462 (Pastor, p. 225).

² Palacky, *op. cit.*

³ *Commentarii*, vii. pp. 188-9.

⁴ Mansi, *Pii II Orationes*, vol. ii. p. 93.

neighbours, they had proved harmful to the country's true welfare. "Because we desire your salvation," Pius concluded, "we refuse your request." Thereupon the Papal procurator, Antonio da Gubbio, came forward, and read the following declaration: "Our most Holy Lord Pope has extinguished and destroyed the Compacts granted by the Council of Basel to the Bohemians, and has said that Communion under both kinds is in nowise necessary to salvation, nor will he hold the obedience made to be real obedience until the King, uprooting and extirpating all errors, has brought the kingdom of Bohemia into union with the Roman Church."¹ The decisive step had been taken, and Pius hoped that he had put an end to George's procrastinations and evasions and had forced him to abandon the Utraquists. When the Bohemians came to take their leave, Pius received them in the garden and talked confidentially and persuasively to the Hussite leaders. He witnessed their departure in the firm belief that his measures had succeeded, and that the submission of Bohemia would soon be an accomplished fact.

George was now forced to declare himself. In this respect at any rate Papal diplomacy had not erred. Yet, contrary to Pius II's calculations, George repudiated his coronation oath, disregarded his repeated promises, and took his stand openly and decisively on the side of the Hussites. His speech at the Diet of Prag in August amounted to a declaration of war upon the Papacy. As an answer to the charge of not fulfilling his coronation oath, he read the words of the oath to the assembled multitude, and then said, "in the Bohemian tongue": "You have heard that we swore to renounce heresy and to rid our kingdom of heretics. Know, then, that we have no love for heretics; but the Pope desires to treat Communion under both kinds and our Compacts as heresy. This we never contemplated, as they are founded on Christ's Gospel and are an heritage of the primitive Church, granted to us by the Council of

¹ Palacky, *Urkundliche Beiträge*, p. 269 (*Fontes rerum Austriacarum*, xx.).

Basel in acknowledgment of our virtue and devotion. . . . We were born and brought up in this Communion, and in it, by the grace of God, we have attained to kingly dignity. We shall cleave to it and defend it, and in it we shall live and die. Our Consort, sitting at our right hand, our children, and all who love us, must also live in conformity with the Compacts; for we hold that there is no other way for the salvation of our souls.”¹

Not content with repudiating the authority of Rome in his own country, Podiebrad threw himself into an elaborate scheme for undermining the position of the Papacy in Europe. His agent was a certain Anton Marini of Grenoble, who startled the world by his proposition that Christian princes and nations would never cease to cling to Rome as long as the Holy See alone took thought for the defence of Christendom against the Turk.² The principal features of the scheme were the initiation of a secular Crusade with the object of placing George of Bohemia upon the throne of Constantinople, and the reform of the Church by means of a General Council of European Princes. For the next two years Marini travelled to and fro between the various Courts of Europe, endeavouring to enlist under his banner all elements of opposition to the Papacy. Yet his scheme was too revolutionary and fantastic even for the fifteenth century. Louis XI might welcome his proposals as a means of bringing pressure to bear upon the Papacy, but he had no real intention of making common cause with Bohemian heretics. The scheme did not enlist the sympathies of Europe, and Venice only expressed public opinion in saying that, much as she welcomed Marini's proposals for a Crusade, the co-operation of the Head of Christendom was necessary to give weight to the undertaking.³ Nevertheless, the blow to Papal prestige was

¹ Palacky, *Urkundliche Beiträge*, p. 275. Cf. also *Commentarii*, lib. x. p. 237.

² Cf. Palacky, *Geschichte Böhmens*, iv. (2), pp. 239-40; Voigt, iii. pp. 487 *seq.*

³ Palacky, *Urkundliche Beiträge*, pp. 289-90.

sufficiently severe, and it sealed the failure of Pius II's relations with Bohemia. He had hoped to win George Podiebrad by friendly support, and then to clench his victory by a display of firmness at the critical moment. George had used Papal support to strengthen his hold upon Bohemia, and then, when the Papal alliance no longer served him, he had abandoned it without scruple. Pius II had, for once, been worsted in a diplomatic struggle. He thought to manipulate the King of Bohemia for his own purposes; he learned, to his mortification, that he had been used as George's tool.

Even after the Diet of Prag, Pius still hoped for reconciliation. When Podiebrad constituted himself the champion of the Emperor, and Frederick besought Pius to stay his hand, the latter agreed to postpone proceedings against "George, who calls himself King of the Bohemians," on condition that the Catholics of Breslau were not molested.¹ Yet in the end he was forced to recognise that George's movements towards friendship were mere attempts to gain time. In the last Consistory which Pius held at the Vatican (16 June 1464) it was decided to proceed against George as a perjured and relapsed heretic, and a Bull was drawn up summoning him to Rome.² But before the Bull could take effect Pius II was no more, and the Bohemian problem remained to occasion fresh controversy and fresh warfare during the reign of his successor.

III. GERMANY

If in France and Bohemia Pius II found himself pitted against the forces of centralisation and nationality, in Germany he had to contend with the many-headed monster of disorder. A mortal sickness, said Nicholas of Cusa, had attacked the Holy Roman Empire. Amid the general tale of weakness, irresolution, and inefficiency which constitutes the history of the Empire at this period, one

¹ Cf. Cugnoni, pp. 145-54, and Pastor, vol. iii. p. 239.

² Cf. Pastor, vol. iii. p. 239, and Voigt, iii. p. 500.

policy alone was pursued with consistency and effect—namely, the policy of the great territorial nobles in transforming themselves from feudatories into sovereign princes. To this land of warring interests and divided authority Pius sought to restore some measure of unity in order that the forces of the Empire might be concentrated upon the Crusade. The difficulties in his path were gigantic, but his intimate knowledge of German politics was a definite asset in his favour. Personal experience enabled him to take the measure of Imperial Diets and Electoral Leagues, and prevented him from being too much discouraged by the apathy of the one or unduly alarmed at the transitory opposition of the other. Yet his former connection with Germany had one disadvantage. Æneas Silvius had belonged of necessity to the Imperial party, and Pius II found it impossible to dissociate himself from the friendships and enmities of earlier years. Thus he approached German politics as a partisan when he should have appeared as an arbiter, with the inevitable result that many of his difficulties were partly of his own making.

In 1459, the chief element of disturbance in Germany lay in the strife between the two great territorial families of Wittelsbach and Hohenzollern.¹ Louis, Duke of Bavaria, who headed the party of opposition to the Emperor, had laid violent hands upon the free city of Donauwerth; Albert Achilles, the brother of the Elector of Brandenburg, who posed as the Emperor's agent and ally, had been charged with the task of punishing the outrage. Pius II knew enough of German princes to realise that the Crusade would gain scant attention so long as the affair of Donauwerth remained undecided, and he arranged for his legates to act as arbiters in the dispute. Yet, whereas his impressions of Louis of Bavaria were derived chiefly from that sunny morning when the Duke refused to leave his hunting in order to accompany Æneas Silvius to the Congress of Regensburg, Albert of Brandenburg was a favourite of

¹ Cf. Voigt, iii. pp. 213-9.

many years' standing. The ruling of the Papal legates proved so manifestly one-sided that the Wittelsbach party refused to accept the settlement. In the spring of 1460 war broke out with fresh vehemence, just at the time when Cardinal Bessarion arrived in Germany to negotiate with the princes upon the subject of the Crusade.

The intrepid Greek Cardinal embarked upon his mission in the spirit of an enthusiast and a martyr. At the age of sixty-five he crossed the Alps in midwinter, ready for any sacrifice that would serve the cause which he had at heart. But he was not prepared for the blank indifference with which the whole Turkish question was regarded in Germany. At the Diet of Nürnberg, his impassioned exhortations fell on deaf ears; and although he could not restrain his tears as he told of fresh disasters upon the Hungarian frontier, his audience remained unmoved. "Few were gathered to meet him, and he received scant attention from those present,"¹ is the Pope's poignant epitome of the proceedings. Further deliberations were postponed until the autumn, owing to the Hohenzollern-Wittelsbach war, but the Diet which eventually met at Vienna was as abortive as its predecessor. Albert Achilles, who had been defeated in the field and forced to sign a humiliating peace, was in no mood for a Crusade. Any attempt to secure the levy of the Turkish tithe evoked opposition. The princes, said the Chronicler of Speyer, had "too many wars among themselves to seek another with the Turk."² To the fiery old Cardinal the situation became intolerable, and in November he was already writing piteous letters to Rome, begging to be recalled.

Pius II replied with exhortations to patience and moderation, holding up Carvajal's long sojourn in Hungary as an example of persevering devotion to the Church's cause. Yet the fact that Diether, Archbishop of Mainz, who had sided with the Hohenzollern in the recent war, appeared

¹ Pius II to the German princes, 8 July 1460 (Raynaldus, 1460, No. 85).

² Cf. Voigt, iii, p. 223.

in the party of opposition at Vienna, did not contribute to his peace of mind.¹ The causes of Diether's change of front lay outside the main questions at issue, in a private quarrel with the Papacy. In 1459 Diether was made Archbishop of Mainz; but there was some doubt as to the validity of his election, and Pius demanded his personal appearance at the Curia before confirming him in the possession of the see. Diether did not obey the summons, and eventually the Bull of confirmation was given to his envoys on condition that he should come to Italy within a year, and pay the annates which had been promised on his behalf. But Diether, says Pius II, "was distinguished not so much by his noble birth as by perfidy and ambition."² Once secure of his position, he repudiated his obligations, vowed that the payments required of him were excessive and unprecedented, and finally had recourse to the time-honoured device of an appeal to a General Council. Sentence of excommunication had already been pronounced upon him when the Diet of Vienna enabled him to use the political situation for his own ends. By placing himself at the head of the anti-Papal, anti-Imperial party, he hoped to frighten the Curia into submission on the question of annates, and, as Primate of the German Church, to win for himself new independence of the Papacy. "There are two objects," the Archbishop announced, "upon which I have set my heart. If I can accomplish them I shall die happy. One is that we should depose our feeble Emperor and put a better man in his place. The other is that we should free ourselves from the yoke of the Apostolic See."³ Before the year (1460) was out he had joined with the Elector Palatine in a scheme for making George Podiebrad King of the Romans, and for the settlement of the German Church upon lines largely independent of the Papacy.

¹ Diether was not present in person at Vienna, but his representative took a prominent part in the opposition to Bessarion. Cf. Pastor, iii. pp. 168-9.

² *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 64.

³ Cugnoni, p. 207 (omitted from *Commentarii*, lib. v. p. 126).

The alliance between Diether and the King of Bohemia proved less dangerous to the Papacy than might have been expected, owing to the fact that George, at this period, was anxious to avoid giving offence to Pius II. Hard words were spoken of both Pope and Emperor at the assembly of princes at Bamberg, but George contrived that effective opposition should be directed against the Emperor alone. Diether, however, persisted in his enmity. In February 1461 he threw down a fresh challenge by taking into his service the arch-enemy of the Holy See and of its present occupant, Gregory Heimburg. Nearly fifteen years had passed since the first round of the duel between Heimburg and Æneas Silvius, but the memory of his defeat still rankled in Heimburg's mind, and the episode of the Congress of Mantua had by no means satiated his desire for vengeance. Thus Gregory and Diether made common cause over their personal antipathy to Pius II, and their alliance brought the Mainz dispute into relation with a still more burning problem of German ecclesiastical politics—the quarrel between Sigismund of Tyrol and Nicholas of Cusa, Bishop of Brixen.

The origin of the Brixen quarrel was not of Pius II's making.¹ It lay as far back as the year 1450, when Nicholas of Cusa was appointed to the vacant see, and determined to put his reforming principles into practice by making his own diocese a model of organisation and discipline. Cusa's appointment was a breach of the Concordat of Vienna, the choice of the Chapter having been overridden in his favour. Thus patriotic sentiment was against him from the first, and the misplaced zeal with which he attempted to force his own standards of order upon his flock soon brought matters to a crisis. Cusa was a mystic of the type of S. Bernard, in that he combined all the charm and tenderness of mystical thought with a certain harshness and rigidity in action. Aghast at the moral degradation and lax dis-

¹ The whole subject is treated exhaustively in Jäger, *Der Streit des Cardinals Nicolaus von Cusa mit dem Herzoge Sigismund von Oesterreich*.

cipline of the monasteries under his charge, he did not pause to consider the expediency or possibility of carrying out drastic reforms which found no sanction in public opinion. Journeying from monastery to monastery, he prescribed rules and put down abuses, but the reforms which he effected hardly survived the hour when he pronounced his farewell blessing. Among his most vehement opponents were the nuns of Sonnenberg, a Benedictine convent under the protection of Count Sigismund, which formed a favourite retreat for the daughters of the Tyrolese nobility. Eventually the Abbess Verena was excommunicated by Cusa, and her indignant nuns appealed against the sentence to Sigismund. The question then resolved itself into a duel between Count and Bishop over their respective rights as temporal and spiritual overlords of the convent. At the time of Pius II's election, Cusa had already fled from the diocese, saying that his life was in danger; Sigismund lay under sentence of excommunication, and the rebellious nuns had been driven from Sonnenberg by force of arms.

Despite these overt acts of hostility, both Count and Bishop honestly desired a settlement, and Pius II's accession afforded some hope of bringing the matter to a peaceful conclusion. Æneas Silvius and Nicholas of Cusa were men of widely divergent type, but they had been intimately associated since the days when they both hung upon the words of Cesarini at Basel. Sigismund conceived a liking for Æneas Silvius during the period of his sojourn at the Imperial Court. He was the recipient of one of Æneas's treatises on education, and he adopted him in the double capacity of tutor and friend. Both Cusa and Sigismund, therefore, were disposed to accept the Pope's mediation, and Pius was sincerely anxious to act fairly by them. Unfortunately, there were two factors in the dispute which made the failure of attempts at settlement almost a foregone conclusion. One was Cusa's rigid, unsympathetic spirit; the other was the interposition of Heimburg as Sigismund's chief spokesman and agent.

By the time that the Brixen quarrel came before the Pope at Mantua, the original cause of the dispute, "the rebellion of Jezebel," as Cusa termed it, was at an end. The Abbess Verena had done penance and received absolution, and a new Abbess was reigning in her stead. But the Bishop had contrived to alienate all classes in his diocese. The clergy resented the importation of foreign ecclesiastics from Cusa's native Rhineland. The nobles disliked the stricter regime imposed upon their daughters at Sonnenberg. The populace was alienated by the suppression of certain annual fairs and public dances. Thus Sigismund was conscious of having public opinion behind him, and when Cusa put forward a claim to rank as a Prince of the Empire, and as such to reckon the Count of Tyrol among his vassals, the opposition of his adversary was stiffened. Nevertheless, a temporary reconciliation was obtained under the Pope's auspices, and both Count and Bishop agreed to leave the technical points in dispute to be determined by legal process. Yet, owing to Heimbург's share in the proceedings, Sigismund quitted Mantua in doubt as to the Pope's good faith, while Pius was left sore and irritated by Heimbург's spiteful references to past history, knowing that the worst interpretation would be placed upon his actions.

Five months after the settlement at Mantua, Cusa was a prisoner in Sigismund's hands. The quarrel broke out again immediately after Cusa's return to Tyrol, and in April 1460, when the Bishop was at Brüneck, Sigismund surrounded the town with troops, took forcible possession of Cusa's person, and only released him after he had signed a treaty yielding all that his captor asked. Cusa then left for Italy, never to return, and to Pius fell the unwelcome task of punishing the outrage. Sigismund had acted under strong provocation, but such violent measures threatened the whole position of the Church, and Pius could not do less than summon him to Rome for trial. Sigismund replied by an appeal to a better-instructed Pope,

which was rather an assumption that Pius did not know the circumstances than a defiance of his authority. But to Pius, fresh from the Bull *Execrabilis*, any appeal was obnoxious; and on the Count's failure to appear in Rome, sentence of excommunication was pronounced against him. This was followed, in August 1460, by a second appeal, drawn up by Heimburg, and calculated in its every phrase to render the breach with the Papacy irreparable. The new appeal was disseminated throughout Germany and Italy. It formed the prelude to a war of writings between the Pope and Heimburg, which gave rise to great display of literary talent, but which contributed little to the dignity of the Holy See. Pius made the fatal mistake of descending to a personal attack upon his rival. He wrote to the citizens of Nürnberg warning them against "that son of the devil, Gregory Heimburg," the instigator of Sigismund's wrongdoing, who had composed the "impious and seditious appeal to a future Council. . . . For this deed, and because he is a chatterer, a liar, presumptuous, and rebellious, we have excommunicated him. We exhort you, therefore, to hold this pestiferous fellow as excommunicate and deprived of the privileges of citizenship." ¹

Heimburg promptly took up the challenge, and made a detailed indictment of Pius II, as a private person, as a politician, and as a Pope, which rivalled the fiercest of humanist invectives.² "The Pope," he wrote, "calls me a chatterer, but he himself is more garrulous than a magpie. . . . I, at least, have not despised the precepts of Civil and Canon Law. He is content with pure verbosity, and is of the number of those who think that everything can be ruled by rhetoric. . . . He accuses me of greed, falsehood, and rebellion . . . let him consider his own past life." With regard to the political situation, Germany is exhorted to hold fast that which has been gained. "The Council is the fortress of your liberties, the foundation-

¹ Pius II to Nuremberg, 18 Oct. 1460 (Ep. 400, *Opera*, p. 932).

² January 1461. Cf. Freher, *Rev. Ger. Script.*, vol. ii, pp. 211-5.

stone of your dignity.”¹ The supremacy of General Councils must be recognised as the last stronghold of resistance to Papal aggression, and Heimbург himself as its most whole-hearted champion. “This,” he cries, in his final manifesto, “this is the heresy of Gregory—his constancy in resisting Papal avarice. This is the sacrilege of Gregory—his championship of liberty, his defence of the Holy Councils threatened by the Mantuan decree. This is his treason—he disturbed the Papal plot for spoiling Germany.”²

Such was the condition of the Brixen quarrel when Heimbург entered the service of Archbishop Diether, in February 1461, on the day before the opening of the Diet of Nürnberg. Everything combined to make this Diet the climax of German opposition to the Papacy. At Heimbург’s instigation, Diether issued a formal appeal to a future General Council, and committed himself and his cause to its protection. The rival houses of Wittelsbach and Hohenzollern united in his support, and letters of protest were addressed to the Pope against the exorbitant demands of the Curia with regard to the Mainz annates, and against Bessarion’s attempts to raise money for the Crusade. To set a seal upon the whole agitation, Heimbург was dispatched to the Court of France to consult with Charles VII over the possibility of combined action against Pope and Emperor. A letter addressed to Pius II by Cardinal Bessarion in March 1461 shows the gravity of the situation. The complaints about the levy of Turkish tithes, Bessarion informed his master, were the outward expression of a many-sided opposition to the Papacy. In the first place, the Pope was regarded as “quite devoted to the Emperor,” and was hated by the princes for this reason alone. Hardly less serious was “the disgraceful in-

¹ Freher, *Rev. Ger. Script.*, p. 212.

² *Apologia Gregorii Heimbург contra detractiones et blasphemias Theodori Laelii* (Freher, pp. 228–55). The whole controversy is given both in Freher and in Goldast, *Monarchia*, T. ii. pp. 1576–1634.

gratitude of Diether," who paid not the slightest heed to the Papal excommunication, and in whose household Rome was reviled daily. "The extravagances from the pen of the shameless heretic, Gregory Heimburg," added fuel to the fire, which was fanned both by the Pope's enemies in France and by "the perpetual complaints of Duke Sigismund."¹

Confronted by this union of hostile forces, Pius could not but tremble for his whole position in Germany. Yet it was precisely in these crises that his knowledge of German methods stood him in good stead. He knew that the opposition was less formidable than it appeared, just because there was no real union between its constituent parts. Diether of Mainz, the Brandenburg princes, Sigismund of Tyrol, might act together for the moment in order to serve their private ends; they were incapable of sinking personal interests in a common movement for the good of Germany. Thus Bessarion's report caused no vital change in the Papal policy. Its chief effect was to bring to the unhappy Cardinal his long-coveted release. Pius realised that he was ill and depressed, and that he could do no further good in Germany. In September, Bessarion left for Rome, thankful to be quit of a task in which his failure was already proved, and to turn his back on a country where "Greek and Latin culture were not esteemed." Pius, meanwhile, awaited the inevitable jealousies which would act upon this formidable coalition as the summer sun upon the snows.

He had not long to wait. The very Diet of Nürnberg which marked the triumph of the anti-Papal, anti-Imperial party contained the germ of its dissolution. George of Bohemia had for some time past aspired to be King of the Romans, and now that the deposition of the Emperor was actually mooted, it seemed possible that he would attain his ambition. The Elector of Brandenburg,

¹ Cardinal Bessarion to Pius II, Vienna, 29 March 1461 (Pastor, pp. 173-5, from *Archivio Segreto del Vaticano*, Arm. xxxix. T. 10, f. 3).

however, declared that he would rather die than consent to the election of the Bohemian King.¹ Thus his adherence to the party of opposition at Nürnberg was prompted by the desire to neutralise George's influence, and in all probability to press the claims of his brother, Albert Achilles. Meanwhile Albert played a double game, revealing the projects of the princes to Frederick III "in deep secrecy," and claiming that he had acted throughout as the Emperor's champion.² George, meanwhile, negotiated with Pius II, offering to restore Bohemia to the Roman obedience and to head the Crusade in person, if the Pope would recognise him as King of the Romans. The result of these intrigues was to unite Pope and Emperor against a common foe. "They seek to lay down the law to us both, and to diminish the authority of the Holy Roman Church and Empire," wrote Frederick to the Pope. "It behoves us to bear one another's burdens in love, and to support one another with mutual counsel and aid."³ Pius replied with warm words of encouragement and friendship. "Be of good cheer; it is difficult to overthrow the Apostolic See and the Roman Empire at the same time. Their roots are planted too deep for the wind to prevail against them, although we who are poised on their summit must expect to feel the blast. Our part is to persevere, and by solid virtue to defeat the machinations of evil men."⁴

Having thus fortified each other for the struggle, Pope and Emperor set themselves to dissolve the opposition by the time-honoured means. Frederick sent his Marshal through Germany in order to dissuade individual princes from attending the proposed Diet at Frankfort. Pius commissioned his envoys to treat separately with the

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. v. p. 126.

² Palacky, *Geschichte von Böhmen*, iv. 2, p. 179. Cf. also Voigt, iii. pp. 241-51.

³ Frederick III to Pius II, 7 April 1461; Birk, *Urkunden Auszüge zur Geschichte Kaiser Friedrich III*, 1452-67.

⁴ Pius II to Frederick III, 7 May 1461 (Ep. 22, ed. Mediolanum).

various persons who had grievances against the Holy See. So well did these tactics succeed that, before the time came for the Diet, the city of Frankfort had refused to receive the assembly within its walls; Albert Achilles, the Elector Palatine, and the Archbishop of Trier had withdrawn their appeal to a General Council; and Diether of Mainz was practically isolated. He would probably have yielded without further delay but for the determination of Heimburg, who persuaded the Archbishop to receive the Diet in his own city of Mainz.

The proceedings which took place at Mainz in May and June 1461 completed the triumph of the Papal party. The question was raised as to whether Heimburg, being excommunicate, should be allowed to address the Diet. Diether, however, overrode the protests of the Papal Legates, and Heimburg spoke in his usual strain. "His oration was so full of blasphemies and errors that henceforth he was called not Gregorius but Errorius."¹ Then, in an able and trenchant speech, the Papal envoy, Rudolf of Rudesheim, vindicated the authority and policy of the Curia. He won a notable victory for his cause. "The Diet, persuaded by his oration, did nothing that Diether asked. Gregory departed in confusion, and the witnesses produced on Diether's behalf gave evidence against him."² Such is the sweeping summary of the *Commentaries*, and although Pius may have overrated the influence of his representative, the fact remains that the opposition was utterly broken down.³ Diether could only make abject submission to the Papacy. "He called the Papal Legates to him and spake much of what had been done, promising to be henceforth another man, to renounce the appeal, and to obey Pius for the rest of his life."⁴ In this

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. vi. p. 143. Pastor (iii. p. 200) maintains that Gregory was prevented from speaking, but cf. Lesca, p. 154.

² *Commentarii*, lib. vi. p. 145.

³ Cf. Voigt, iii. pp. 254-60, who considers the Archbishop of Trier and the Brandenburg envoys the chief instruments of the victory.

⁴ *Commentarii*, lib. vi. p. 145.

chastened frame of mind he no longer required the services of Gregory Heimbург, and the latter retired in disgust to the Court of Sigismund of Tyrol. Thus ended another round of the duel between Heimbург and Æneas, leaving the fruits of the victory on the whole with the latter. But Heimbург had dealt his adversary some hard blows. His pertinacity was unbounded, and he looked forward with undiminished ardour to fresh encounters in the future.

The Diet of Mainz marked a definite stage in German ecclesiastical history. From the time of the declaration of neutrality in 1438 there had been signs of a movement for reforming the German Church on national lines, through the concerted action of the princes. The movement had always been tentative and feeble. It may even be said that it had, from the first, been doomed to failure, because the princes, with whom territorial interests were paramount, could never bring themselves to give it persistent and whole-hearted support. A grant of privileges which would increase his hold over the Church in his own dominions was sufficient to turn the keenest patriot from his path. Now, however, this national reform movement was definitely at an end. The victory of Papal supremacy over German independence, begun by Æneas Silvius in the Concordat of Vienna, had been completed by Pius II at the Diet of Mainz. Pius had still to face considerable opposition in Germany. The problems of Mainz and Brixen, to take the two most prominent examples, were by no means solved. But of organised national opposition he knew no more. His remorseless power of seeing things as they are had pierced the hollowness of German patriotism, and his diplomacy had enabled him to expose it.

For more than two years after the Diet of Mainz the quarrel over the Archbishopric continued to harass Germany. Diether's promises were made only to be broken, and in 1461 he was deposed from his office, Adolf

of Nassau being made Archbishop in his stead. There followed a protracted struggle between Adolf and Diether for the possession of the see. The quarrel became part of the great Wittelsbach-Hohenzollern feud, and civil war devastated the unhappy diocese. At last, in October 1462, Adolf succeeded in capturing the city of Mainz, and from that time forward Diether became amenable to negotiation. The reconciliation was effected by the new Archbishop of Cologne, a brother of the Count Palatine, and in October 1463 Diether agreed to recognise Adolf as Archbishop, retaining a certain portion of territory in his own hands. On these terms he made his peace with the Papacy and received absolution. Meanwhile, the affairs of the Emperor, always closely associated with those of the Pope, also took a favourable turn. In the autumn of 1462, when he was besieged in the citadel of Vienna by his own Austrian subjects, headed by his brother Albert, he found an unexpected ally in George of Bohemia. "Poor Germany, miserable Christendom," sighed Pius II; "the Emperor can only be saved by a heretic King."¹ Owing to the heretic's timely intervention, Frederick was able to tide over the crisis until the death of his brother Albert in December 1463 ended his most serious difficulties.

When his own horizon had cleared, Frederick set himself to effect a reconciliation between the Pope and Sigismund. "Most Holy Father," he wrote in February 1464, "it is time that this matter should be settled. The authority of the Church is too little respected. In consideration of the times in which we live, a little indulgence is necessary."² The condition of Tyrol at this time afforded clear proof that ecclesiastical penalties no longer commended themselves to the conscience of the age.³ If the Papal censures had been carried into effect, Tyrol would have been shunned

¹ Pius II to Frederick III, Rome, 1 Jan. 1463 (Ep. 39, ed. Mediol.).

² Frederick III to Pius II, 2 Feb. 1464; Jäger, *Der Streit*, vol. ii. pp. 414-5.

³ Cf. Voigt, iii. pp. 396-403.

like a plague spot, cut off from trade with her neighbours, a prey to robbers, deprived of all ecclesiastical privileges. But in practice they were little regarded, and Sigismund felt that he had his subjects behind him when he refused to apologise or retract until the censures were removed. But in matters which involved the dignity of the Holy See, Pius could be obstinate in the extreme. "Must we recall our actions?" he asked. "Must we accuse ourselves of injustice in order that he (Sigismund) need not acknowledge his insolence?"¹ At last he yielded to the general desire for a settlement, and it was decided that the terms of peace proposed by the Emperor should be accepted. On 25 Aug. 1464 Frederick III, acting as Sigismund's representative, besought pardon and received absolution from the Papal Legate. But before this final termination of the Brixen struggle both Nicholas of Cusa and Pius II had ceased to live.² Of all the combatants in the great ecclesiastical war only Gregory Heimburg remained unrepentant and unabsolved. Champion of a lost cause as far as Germany was concerned, he betook himself to Bohemia, trusting that the service of the heretic King would afford scope for his lifelong opposition to Rome.

Both in Mainz and Brixen a long-drawn-out struggle ended in the vindication of Papal authority, and Pius had the satisfaction of knowing that he had not worked in vain. Nevertheless, the events of his pontificate had laid bare the weakness of the Papal power in Germany. Papal censures had ceased to terrify; clergy and laity alike realised that they could be disregarded with impunity. Excommunicate princes were no longer outcasts who must sue for pardon in order to regain a place in society. They regarded it as an act of condescension on their part when they consented to receive absolution. Papal exactions

¹ Pius II to Frederick III, 1 March 1464; Jäger, *Der Streit*, Bd. ii. p. 417.

² Cf. Pastor, iii. pp. 211-2. The Emperor proffered his terms of peace on 12 June. Cusa died on 11 Aug.; Pius II three days later.

were a perpetual source of friction, and the greed of the Curia had so impressed itself upon the mind of the German nation that every action of the Pope was looked upon as a pretext for raising money. To such a man as Heimburg, his vision filled with the abuses of the Roman system, Pius II's vindication of Papal power seemed nothing else than the triumph of evil. Offensive in his methods and unattractive in his personality, Heimburg stood, nevertheless, for an ideal that was worth fighting for. A national ecclesiastical system, bred of unselfish efforts for their country's weal on the part of the national leaders, might have changed the course of German history. Heimburg knew that his aims were not unworthy, and a sense of aggrieved virtue prevented him from seeing that Germany had really nothing to offer in the place of the present regime. Pius II's victory was not that of a crafty diplomat trampling upon national aspirations. It was the triumph of persistency and determined pursuit of an ideal over selfishness and inconsistency. The feebleness of the opposition was the chief cause of such measure of success as Pius achieved in Germany.

The Papacy of Pius II was not, and never could be, the mediæval Papacy. To the rising nations of Europe it was less a source of undisputed authority than a foreign power, strong enough to be worth propitiating, and capable of being made to serve as a useful ally. It was still, however, a force to be reckoned with, and this in large measure owing to the tireless energy and unfailing courage of the Pope himself. Always making the best of a situation, quick to seize every point of vantage, slow to press matters to extremities, Pius did all that could be done under the circumstances. Thus he left the reputation of the Papacy in Europe higher than he found it. He showed that, in spite of its abuses, the Apostolic See stood for ideals and aspirations nobler than the common aims of a self-seeking age.

CHAPTER XI

THE PAPAL COURT

“**T**HE Roman Curia is world-wide, and there is room in it for every variety of person and opinion. We are acquainted with both good and evil, and you will find here pride and humility, miserliness and extravagance, luxury and asceticism, lust and continence, the highest virtue and the most shameless vice. It is a net cast into the sea filled with all manner of fish. Grain and chaff lie together on the threshing-floor, foolishness and wisdom dwell side by side. What wonder if we sometimes do noble deeds, which win just praise, and sometimes behave in a way that brings censure upon us and causes us to be little esteemed ? ” ¹ So wrote Cardinal Piccolomini in the early days of his acquaintance with the Roman Curia, and the description enables us to realise the nature of the Court over which Pius II was called to preside. It cannot be judged by the standards of a religious community, for its principal *raison d'être* was not religious but political. As head of the Church, the chief problems with which the Pope had to deal were those of statesmanship—all the complicated questions of law, politics, and finance arising out of a world-wide organisation. And the Curia was not only the centre of Church government ; it was also a bureau of international politics and the capital of the first State in Italy. It was distinguished from the Court of Milan or Naples chiefly by its cosmopolitan character.

¹ Æneas, Cardinal of Siena, to Sceva de Corte, 2 Dec. 1457 (Ep. 352, *Opera*, p. 829).



CATHEDRAL (FAÇADE)
PIENZA

Here every side and type of European civilisation mingled. The officer of the Curia must be versed in all the niceties of European statecraft, and must know how to deal with the motley crowd of diplomatists and warriors, scholars and princes, which streamed into Rome. "We are not called upon to govern heaven and the angels, but the world and men," said Pius to his Cardinals, "therefore we must choose men for the task."¹

At the beginning of Pius II's reign the College of Cardinals, alone, presented varied material to the student of human nature. The three chief departments of the Curia—the Penitentiary, the Chancery, and the Camera—were presided over by Cardinals Calandrini, Borgia, and Scarampo. Theoretically the Grand Penitentiary was the leading member of the College; but Calandrini was a simple, hard-working man of no great force or ability, and he was overshadowed by his more conspicuous colleagues. At the first scrutiny of the Conclave he had received as many votes as Cardinal Piccolomini, but he sacrificed his own chances of the Papacy in order to combine with the other Italian Cardinals in the choice of Pius II. Thus it was an act of gratitude on the Pope's part to appoint him to the vacant office of Penitentiary. The office of Vice-Chancellor was held by Rodrigo Borgia, the future Alexander VI, a vigorous and pleasure-loving youth of twenty-seven, whose splendid entertainments and magnificent establishment were the wonder of the hour. "He looks as if he were capable of every evil," said the Mantuan chronicler who watched him riding to the sessions of the Congress "in great pomp," attended by over two hundred horsemen.² With Pius II he was always on excellent terms, and he threw himself with the utmost good nature into any project which the Pope might have on hand. Pius in return treated him with favour and did not look too closely into his manner of life. But there were occasions when remonstrance was

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. iv. p. 98.

² Schivenoglia, *Cronaca di Mantova*, p. 137.

imperative. When the Curia was at Siena in the summer of 1460, Borgia invited some of the ladies of the city to the garden of a certain Giovanni dei Bicchi, and spent some five hours dancing and flirting in their company "as if he were one of the common herd of secular youths." The husbands, fathers, and brothers of the guests were carefully excluded, and the whole affair caused much scandal among the respectable citizens. Pius II's views on the matter are expressed in the admonitory letter which he wrote to Borgia from Petrioli, where he was taking baths.¹ "I hear," he wrote, "that it has been the common talk of Siena ever since, and here at the baths, where there are a great number of people, both clerical and lay, you have been the subject of much gossip. . . . If we were to say that this conduct did not displease us, we should err. It displeases us more than we can say, for the clerical order and our ministry is brought into disrepute. . . . The Vicar of Christ who permits such things falls into the same contempt. . . . We leave it to you to judge if it becomes your station to toy with girls, to pelt them with fruits, to hand to her you favour the cup which you have sipped, and, neglecting study, to spend the whole day in every kind of pleasure, having shut out husbands that you might do this with greater freedom. . . . If you excuse yourself on the ground of youth, you are old enough to understand the responsibility of your position. A Cardinal ought to be irreproachable, an example of conduct. . . . Let your prudence, therefore, consider your dignity, and check this vain behaviour. If this occurs again, we shall be obliged to show our displeasure, and our rebuke will put you to open shame. We have always loved you and regarded you as a model of gravity and decorum; it is for you to re-establish our good opinion. Your years, which give hope of reformation, lead us to admonish you as a father."

Luigi Scarampo, Patriarch of Aquileia, who occupied

¹ Pius II to Cardinal Borgia, Petrioli, 11 June 1460 (Raynaldus, 1460, Nos. 31 and 32),

the post of Chamberlain, was reputed to be the richest man in Italy after Cosimo dei Medici.¹ At the instance of Calixtus III, he had reluctantly taken charge of a naval expedition against the Turk, but he returned home immediately after that Pope's death, thankful to be rid of his task, and determined to have nothing more to do with Crusades. His anti-crusading policy naturally prejudiced him in Pius II's eyes, and the two were never friends. Yet his wealth rendered him a factor in the College which could not be neglected, and in 1463 he was honoured by a Papal visit to his magnificent palace near Albano. Here he had acquired the ancient monastery of S. Paolo, and had turned it into a sumptuous country house, restoring the church and laying out pleasure grounds. Pius, "knowing the antiquity of the place, accepted his invitation willingly," and did not fail to record his impressions of the visit.² Scarampo, he says, "planted gardens where he had once found wolves and foxes, and made it a most pleasant place. . . . He kept animals of diverse kinds, and among them peacocks, Indian fowls, and goats brought from Syria, which had very long ears." Scarampo's detested rival was Cardinal Barbo, the splendour-loving Venetian and connoisseur of jewellery who succeeded Pius II as Pope. Thus Pius II's death ended the Chamberlain's political career, and he died in March 1465, overcome with rage at the election of his enemy.

Of a very different type from these secularly minded ecclesiastics was the German scholar and mystic Nicholas of Cusa. At the beginning of Pius II's reign Cusa produced a comprehensive scheme of reorganisation which would have moulded the Church upon the pattern of a gigantic monastery, and applied to the Catholic world at large the discipline which failed so conspicuously in his own diocese

¹ Cf. Voigt, iii, 507-8 and 543 *seq.* Here it is said that no Cardinal is mentioned as Chamberlain under Pius II, but Pius himself constantly refers to Scarampo as "Camerarius."

² *Commentarii*, lib. xi. p. 306,

of Brixen. Pius had great belief in Cusa's uprightness and ability, and he showed his confidence in him on more than one occasion. He went so far as to embody the substance of Cusa's scheme in the reforming Bull which was drafted in 1460.¹ But, more discerning than his subordinate, the Pope knew that the Church could not be reformed wholesale. Little improvements in detail, the abolition of some peculiar abuse, or the restoration of discipline in a single monastery, did not commend themselves to Cusa's eager and uncompromising spirit. Such, however, was Pius II's way of working, and few can deny its wisdom.

Another representative of learning in the College was the Greek Cardinal, Bessarion, whose presence in Rome was almost the sole fruit of the attempted union with the Eastern Church under Eugenius IV. His whole heart was in the Crusade, but he was one of those fatally ineffective persons who only weary the world of the causes which they champion. His knowledge of the East gave him a natural right to speak on the Turkish question, and Pius brought him forward on every possible occasion. Nevertheless, his orations failed to evoke enthusiasm. "He showed how far superior Latin eloquence is to Greek,"² is Pius's comment upon his speech at Mantua. When he preached in S. Peter's in honour of the reception of S. Andrew's head, he was listened to with respectful attention, but he could not make his hearers forget that they were tired after the exertions of the morning, and that the hour was late.³ Bessarion had been among the most vehement opponents of Pius II's election, but the Pope's conduct at Mantua entirely altered his opinion. Henceforth he was Pius's warmest champion, and he was regarded as the Pope's favourite among the Cardinals, with the exception of Carvajal.

This saintly Spanish Cardinal was the object of Pius II's

¹ Cf. Pastor, iii. pp. 270-6. Cusa's project is preserved in the State Library at Munich (Cod. 422). The draft of Pius II's Bull is in the Barberini Library, Rome.

² *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 82.

³ *Ibid.*, lib. viii. p. 204.

deepest admiration. In earlier days, Æneas had always shown his best side to Carvajal. He had never attempted to flatter him, and had coveted his good opinion. Carvajal for his part had regarded Æneas with considerable disapproval, but he soon realised that a change had taken place in the new Pope's character. When he saw Pius II struggling manfully to do his duty, and never for one moment relinquishing his crusading policy, Carvajal forgot the slippery diplomatist of former years, and held out the hand of friendship to the man whom he had once despised. Early in 1462 Carvajal returned to Rome after six strenuous years in Hungary. In the council-chamber and on the battle-field he had laboured unremittingly for the defence of Christendom, and he had spent his strength in the service of the Church. Old before his time, he took up his abode in a modest dwelling in Rome, and set an example of holy living which excited the wondering admiration of his more worldly colleagues. He was never absent from Church festivals or meetings of the Consistory. When he had reason to disagree with the Pope, or any of his colleagues, he never spoke as though he wished to oppose, but contented himself with quietly stating his opinion. A hair shirt was concealed beneath his simple robes; he was constant in prayer and fasting; he spent his money in almsgiving and in the restoration of churches. The courteous and modest bearing of the members of his household reflected the saintly conversation of their master.¹ At first sight it seems hard to understand the appeal which this stern ascetic made to Pius II. Yet even in his youth complete sincerity had exercised singular fascination over him, and years of experience of an evil world had increased his appreciation of so rare a virtue. Moreover, Carvajal was no joyless saint. "He never overlooked the joys of life," and was as anxious "to entertain men with innocent festivity" as to help them in more serious ways.² When Pius visited Ostia in the spring of 1463, Carvajal begged

¹ *Commentarii Jacobi Card. Papiensis*, p. 454.

² *Loc. cit.*

him to make an expedition to his own Bishopric of Porto. Here among the ruins of the ancient city, fragrant with memories of Imperial Rome, the saintly Cardinal received his guest "with joyful face and pleasant speech, and talked much of Trajan."¹ Thus the two passed a happy day's sight-seeing, and did their best to reconstruct the by-gone ages which they both loved. Pius and Carvajal founded their friendship upon work performed together for a common cause. They enriched it by pleasures shared together, to which each contributed the priceless gift of enjoyment.

Pius had not long been Pope before he began to consider the possibility of adding new members to the Sacred College. "A Pope," he says, "is not considered completely a Pope until he creates Cardinals."² Moreover, the persistent opposition of the French party made it imperative for him to secure stronger political support than he possessed among the Cardinals immediately surrounding him. When he announced his intentions, in Lent 1460, he found that the College was strongly opposed to any fresh creations. "You have proposed persons whom I would not have in my kitchen or stable," grumbled Scarampo; "for my part, I do not see why fresh creations are necessary. There are more than enough of us, both for service abroad and for counsel at home. Quantity cheapens everything. Our revenues do not suffice for us, and you wish to add others who will take the bread out of our mouths."³ At length Pius won the consent of the College to five new creations. "You will not refuse a sixth," he said, "if I name one who is eminently worthy, and whom you will all praise."⁴ He named Alessandro Oliva, General of the Augustinian Order, a man of conspicuous piety and considerable learning. Oliva's eleva-

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. xi. p. 303. Pius II promoted Carvajal to be Cardinal Bishop of Porto in 1461.

² *Commentarii*, lib. iv. p. 97.

³ Cugnoni, p. 199 (omitted from *Commentarii*, lib. iv. p. 98).

⁴ *Commentarii*, lib. iv. p. 98.

tion surprised every one, and himself most of all. "No one thought that a poor monk would be made a Cardinal, although he was a gifted preacher of God's word, and a holy man."¹ During the three years of his Cardinalate, he practised the religious life as sedulously as if he were in his cloister, and his death in August 1463 caused genuine grief to the Pope. "Three or four Cardinals," he said, "might have died without causing injury to the College, but this death inflicted a severe wound upon the Church."² The other new creations were Angelo Capranica, Bishop of Rieti, the brother of Æneas's first master; Bernardo Erolo, Bishop of Spoleto, the head of the Apostolic Referendaries; Niccolò Forteguerria, a relation of the Pope's mother; Burchard, Provost and afterwards Archbishop of Salzburg;³ and Francesco Piccolomini, the Pope's young nephew, who had just taken his degree at Perugia. The worst that could be said of Pius II's selection was that it contained no one of any great eminence. Capranica and Erolo proved able administrators of the States of the Church; Forteguerria did excellent service as the Pope's chief military adviser; Piccolomini enjoyed a brief tenure of the Papacy as Pius III. Thus Pius could congratulate himself upon adding a band of loyal and efficient servants to the Sacred College, and he considered that he had done well by his country in creating five Italian Cardinals at once.

Pius's second creation, in Advent 1461, was designed chiefly to satisfy the European powers. The ultramontanes had been neglected in 1460, and it was imperative to do something for France in return for the surrender of the Pragmatic Sanction. The Cardinals, however, were even more vehemently opposed to fresh creations than they had been in the previous year—"they shut up their ears like asps, and could not be persuaded."⁴ Having

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. iv. p. 98.

² Cugnoni, p. 229 (omitted from *Commentarii*, lib. xii. p. 329).

³ Burchard's nomination was not published until the creation of the other non-Italian Cardinals in 1461.

⁴ Cugnoni, p. 214 (omitted from *Commentarii*, lib. vii. p. 183).

failed to move them in Consistory, Pius fell back on the expedient of winning over the Cardinals severally. The conversations which ensued give an unedifying picture of the by-ways of Papal diplomacy.¹ Scarampo and Colonna were chiefly anxious to prevent the elevation to the purple of Bartolomeo Vitteleschi, Bishop of Corneto. Orsini was known to favour his candidature. Pius, therefore, first approached Orsini, and begged him, in the interests of his friend Vitteleschi, not to oppose his wishes. When he remained obdurate, Pius turned to Scarampo and Colonna, and gained their consent to his other nominations on condition that Vitteleschi was excluded.

Many of the Cardinals objected strongly to Jean Jouffroy, Bishop of Arras; and his own countryman, Alain, Cardinal of Avignon, entreated Pius not to admit such a firebrand into the Sacred College. "There will be no peace or quiet in the College from this time forward. He will sow discord and nourish faction. . . . You will live to repent of your action, and to say to yourself, 'Would that I had believed Alain!'" "What you say is only too true, Alain," Pius replied. "We know the man, and you have painted him as he is. But what can we do? . . . Arras is learned, eloquent, and bold, as you say. He is our legate at the French Court, and both the King and the Duke of Burgundy wish him to be made a Cardinal. We have been promised the abolition of the Pragmatic Sanction, which is of all things most harmful to the Apostolic See. If we refuse the King's prayers, the Pragmatic will continue to have force in France. If Arras knows that he is rejected, he will rage like a dragon, and turn all his strength against the Papacy. . . . We confess that it is dangerous to include him among the Cardinals, but it is still more dangerous to exclude him. Of two evils, we must choose the lesser." Alain yielded to the Pope's arguments, but the Cardinal of Arras became, as he foretold, a

¹ Cugnoni, pp. 214-8.

perpetual source of annoyance to Pius II. He thwarted his projects in every possible way, more especially with regard to the Crusade, and he scandalised Rome by his vicious habits. At last, in the autumn of 1463, he left for France, and the whole Curia rejoiced at his departure.¹

With Nicholas of Cusa, Pius began by adopting the methods of flattery, talking to him confidentially about the difficulties of the situation, and explaining to him the absolute necessity of propitiating the French King. "There is no one in whom we have greater confidence than you, brother; if every one else fails us, we know that you will remain true. . . . You, who love us, will aid us in this matter." But Cusa's will could not be bent by considerations of expediency, and he met Pius's advances by a furious outburst against Pope and Curia. "I have long thought that you hated me, O Pope," he replied; "now I am certain of it, for you have asked of me that which I cannot perform without disgrace. You intend to make new Cardinals at your own pleasure, without urgent cause, in defiance of the oath which you swore in the Conclave, both before and after your election, that you would not create Cardinals save with the consent of the majority of the College, and in accordance with the Constance decrees. And you wish to make me an accomplice of your sin. . . . If you can bear the truth, I will tell you that I am ill-pleased with everything that goes on in the Curia. It is all corrupt. No one does his work properly. Neither you nor the Cardinals care for the welfare of the Church. What observance is there of the canons? What reverence for the law? What zeal in the practice of religion? Ambition and avarice are paramount. If I speak of reform, I am laughed at. I cannot tolerate these proceedings. Let me go into the wilderness and live my own life." So saying, the unhappy Cardinal burst into tears. He was treated to a severe scolding from the Pope, who proved to him in detail that no oath

¹ Cf. Cugnoni, pp. 230-3, and *Commentarii*, lib. xii. p. 343.

was violated and no decree set aside by treating separately with the Cardinals. It was presumption on Cusa's part to censure the Pope's proceedings; and as for his complaint that no one did their duty, if he deserted the Curia at this juncture, he would be the worst offender. Cusa left the Pope's presence speechless and ashamed. "After this," observes Pius complacently, "he became gentler, and abandoned much of his foolish rigidity, showing that the Pope's reproofs were not in vain." The scene is an illuminating commentary upon the character of the two persons concerned. For Cusa there was no such word as compromise; he knew the letter of the law, and was determined to enforce it. Pius II's diplomatic manœuvres appeared to him in the light of a criminal surrender to the methods of the wicked world. Yet in the tangled skein of fifteenth-century politics, what could a poor Pope do but compromise? Pius was no warrior-saint, but a man of the world, with wide experience and no illusions, who was doing his utmost to steer the bark of S. Peter in the right course. What he asked of Cusa was the recognition that their ultimate aims were the same. If he were convinced of his sincerity, Pius thought, surely he could accept his methods as the outcome of stern necessity.

When the Consistory met again, no one opposed the Pope's wishes, and he named six persons whom he proposed to raise to the purple. The three new ultramontanes were the Bishop of Arras, Prince Louis d'Albret, and the Spaniard, Don Jayme de Cordova. Francesco Gonzaga, the son of the Marquis of Mantua, was also of the nature of a "Crown" Cardinal. His admission to the College caused great rejoicing at the Mantuan Court, and both Poliziano's verse and Mantegna's painting helped to celebrate the occasion. The new Cardinal was only seventeen, but he looked older than his age, and "he was a grey-beard in gravity and wisdom."¹ Mean-

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. vii. p. 184.

while the Pope took the opportunity to add two of his own friends to the list. Bartolomeo Roverella, Archbishop of Ravenna, was a friend of Æneas's secretarial days, and had recently distinguished himself as Papal Legate in the Neapolitan war. Jacopo Ammanati, Bishop of Pavia, was Pius II's most faithful friend and disciple. "We are not Cardinals but traitors," grumbled Cardinal Tebaldo, when he saw that the Pope's nominations would be accepted. "The dignity of the office is destroyed. If the Pope commands us to add three hundred persons to our numbers, I shall not oppose him."¹ Pius had won the day. He had satisfied the European powers, and had strengthened his own party in the College. But the means by which he gained his end show that a good deal of the old Æneas had survived his elevation to the Papacy.

When the humanist Pope ascended the throne of S. Peter, the scholars of Italy hailed his election as the dawn of a golden age. "In the eyes of all distinguished and cultured men, you have arisen like a sun, dispersing the mists of darkness,"² wrote Filelfo; and he and many another humanist looked forward to a return of the happy days of Nicholas V. But they were sadly disillusioned. Pius was ready to recognise merit, but he knew too much of the under-world of literary adventurers to care for their flatteries. His critical taste made him a severe judge of the mediocre productions of professional humanists, and he preferred that his literary reputation should rest upon his own writings rather than upon his patronage of other scholars. The crowd of copyists, collectors, translators, and versifiers did not reappear in Rome. Instead, there was a Pope who composed his own Bulls, and who was surrounded by a select company of kindred spirits, friends and companions rather than Court

¹ Cugnoni, p. 218.

² F. Filelfo to Pius II, 1 Nov. 1458. Cf. Voigt, iii. pp. 606-7, and Rosmini, *Vita di Filelfo*, vol. ii. p. 104.

humanists. The few eminent scholars of the day, however, did not go unrewarded. Lodrisio Crivelli and Bartolomeo Platina both held posts in the Curia, and the learned historian Flavio Biondo found in Pius an appreciative patron. The Pope liked to have Biondo with him upon his expeditions, in order that the old antiquarian might act as his guide to the classical remains. His book on Roman antiquities, *Roma Triumphans*, was dedicated to Pius II, and his great historical work, the *Decades*, was "imbellished and corrected" by the Pope himself.¹ "Biondo's eloquence," say Pius, "was far removed from that of the ancients, and he did not revise his writings carefully enough; he thought less of the truth of what he wrote than of the amount. . . . But," he adds, "some people might say the same of us, for although we write what is true, nevertheless ours is rough, ill-digested history. Perchance another may bring our researches and those of Biondo to light, and may thus reap the fruit of our labour."²

Francesco Filelfo was almost the sole survivor of the great generation of humanists, and to him Pius showed rather cold courtesy. He awarded him a pension of two hundred ducats a year, but when Filelfo proposed to come and settle in Rome, the Pope advised him to enjoy his pension in Milan.³ In spite of the rebuff, Filelfo and his two sons soon made their appearance at the Curia, bent upon making their fortunes at the Pope's expense. Filelfo first endeavoured to approach Pius through Ammanati, sending him part of the *Sforziade* for criticism, and making flattering remarks that he hoped would be handed on to the Pope. But Pius refused to be drawn into a literary correspondence. In his younger days he delighted in a lengthy discussion upon a point of scholarship, and welcomed

¹ Pius, Pont. Max., *Abbreviationem Flavii Blondii* (*Opera*, pp. 144-281).

² *Commentarii*, lib. xi. p. 310.

³ Ammanati to Filelfo, *Jacobi Card. Pap. Epistolae*, No. 25, p. 467.

any subject that afforded opportunity for elegant writing. Now, however, he was too old and too much occupied for dilettante composition. When Filelfo pointed out a mistake of grammar in one of his poems, he thanked him for his correction, and said that he feared it would be only too easy for the idle to find similar errors in the writings of a busy man like himself.¹ Ere long Filelfo exchanged flattery for abuse. He made an anonymous attack upon Pius during his lifetime, and did his best to blacken his memory after death. When the news of the Pope's death reached him, he, who had likened his accession to the sunrise, called upon the poets and Muses to rejoice that God had taken Pius from their midst.²

Pius II's small circle of intimates, the men whom he chose as the companions of his daily life, reflect two notable features of his character—his love of home and his unconventionality. The two private secretaries who wrote at his dictation and helped him with his literary work were both Sieneſe. One was his cousin, Goro Lolli, the friend and comrade of his student days ; the other, Agostino dei Patrizzi, was also a University friend. Relations and fellow-citizens of the Pope held all the chief posts in the Curia, and Pius had no difficulty in convincing himself that they were chosen entirely upon their merits. To be a Sieneſe was in itself a title to reward in his eyes, and the greatest honour which he could confer upon a friend was to obtain for him the citizenship of Siena. Two of his closest companions, however, were neither Sieneſe nor friends of his youth. Jacopo Ammanati's career was not unlike Pius II's. He came to Rome as a struggling scholar

¹ *Jacobi Card. Papiensis, Ep. 25.*

² *Gratulatio de morte Pii II* (Rosmini, *Vita di Filelfo*, vol. ii. p. 320) —

“ Gaudeat orator, Musae gaudete Latinae ;
Sustulit e medio quod Deus ipse Pium.
Ut bene consuluit doctis Deus omnibus aequae,
Quos Pius in cunctos se tulit usque gravem.
Nunc sperare licet. Nobis deus optime Quintum
Reddito Nicoleon, Eugeniumve patrem.”

in the days of Nicholas v, and began his career, as Æneas before him, in the service of Cardinal Capranica. The legend goes that he threw up his post because the austere Capranica tore up his literary compositions in order to teach him humility.¹ Under Calixtus III he became an Apostolic secretary, and Pius confirmed him in his office on the very day of his own election. From henceforth Ammanati enjoyed the Pope's special favour. He was made Bishop of Pavia in 1460, a Cardinal in 1461, and he was adopted into the Piccolomini family. Before everything a humanist, his relation to Pius II was that of a literary disciple. His letters and *Commentaries* are a faithful imitation of those of Pius II, and he carried on the Pope's great work for the five years which succeeded his death. Pius, says Ammanati's biographer, loved him not only for his literary talents, but for his sound judgment and stainless honesty.² He lived in high favour at the Papal Court, free from all taint of corruption, and he left it a poor man.³ He shared the Pope's love of country life and was fond of hunting. Although somewhat lacking in force, he was doubtless a sympathetic companion. His affection for Pius II was the ruling motive of his life.

The Pope's other favourite, the jovial epigrammatist, Giovanni Campano, was a man of very different character. He began life as a shepherd boy, and raised himself by his own efforts to the position of a University lecturer at Perugia. He first came to the Curia in 1459, as a member of the Perugian embassy of congratulation to Pius II, and Ammanati introduced him to the Pope's notice. The portrait which he gives of himself shows that he owed nothing to his appearance. Short, stout, and awkward, with shaggy eyebrows and spreading nostrils, he was at a loss to know with what wild beast to compare himself.⁴

¹ Vespasiano, *Card. Domenico Capranica*, § 3.

² Jacobus Volaterranus, Preface to *Com. Card. Papiensis*, p. 352.

³ Voigt, iii. p. 540.

⁴ Campanus, *Opera* (Rome, 1595); *Epistolæ*, lib. iii., "Dulciboni suo."

But he had a keen wit and a picturesque, forcible style, and he had proved his powers as an historian by a life of the *condottiere* Braccio. No one could be less like the typical Court poet than this burly peasant, yet such was his virtual office at the Curia. He produced epigrams and witticisms on every occasion, and Pius showed his appreciation of them by quoting them largely in the *Commentaries*. When Campano was made a Bishop, the honour was not all joy to him. His cassock impeded his movements, and Ammanati told him that it was not suitable for a Bishop to make puns. He was full of affectionate gratitude towards Pius II. "He has made you great," he wrote to Ammanati, "and has raised me above mediocrity. Therefore we ought above all things to add to his pleasure and reputation." ¹

Campano's Life of Pius II is full of little intimate details which would only be known to one who was constantly with him.² He, Ammanati, and Goro Lolli were the Pope's comrades rather than his servants. With them Pius could lay aside his dignity, and jest and gossip in the friendly, informal way that had won him so many friends in the past. Ammanati's description of a day's holiday from Mantua, at the time of the Congress, gives a charming picture of Pius II's life in the society of these chosen companions.³ "While he was at Mantua Pius fell dangerously ill, and when he began to recover, he craved for a little diversion in order to help him regain strength. He decided to pay a few days' visit to a monastery called *degli Angeli*,⁴ three miles distant from Mantua; and in order to make the journey more agreeable, he travelled by way of the Mincio. The Pope was accustomed to turn to us when he was in

¹ Campano to Ammanati (*Card. Pap.*, Ep. 30, p. 472).

² Given in the Basel edition of Pius II's works.

³ Jacopo Ammanati to Francesco Piccolomini. The party included Lorenzo Roverella, the brother of the Archbishop, and Agapito di Cenci dei Rustici, a Roman poet of some repute (*Jac. Card. Pap.*, Ep. 49, p. 498).

⁴ The famous sanctuary of S. Maria delle Grazie.

need of relaxation, and so we were commanded to embark upon the same boat as himself." The party set out in a holiday mood, and Goro Lolli brought with him some congratulatory verses dedicated to Pius, which he had not yet had an opportunity of hearing. "We thought that this was a good time to read them, as they would amuse the Pope on his holiday; for he enjoyed having poetry read aloud to him during his leisure hours." Ere long the reading inspired the present company to impromptu rhyming, and light verses were bandied from mouth to mouth. Pius laughed heartily at the witticisms of his friends, and soon contributed his share to the entertainment. It was remarked that all the poets contrived to ask for something in their verses, and Campano delighted the party by a poem in which he said that gifts ought not to be given to those who asked, but to those who did not ask, at the same time hinting that he himself was among the deserving. Pius made an appropriate repartee, and then produced the following epigram:—

"Discite pro numeris numeros sperare poetæ,
Mutare est animus carmina non emere."¹

Unfortunately, this somewhat incautious jest survived, and excited the anger of every humanist who heard it. It was quoted as a proof of the Pope's contempt for poetry and of his determination to do nothing for the class to which he had once belonged. In defence of his master, Ammanati told the story of the epigram's origin, and showed that "it was not premeditated, nor composed in dispraise of poets, but improvised at the moment for the entertainment of the company." It was a gay, warm-hearted circle of friends that surrounded this most unconventional of Popes, and when Pius II was laid in his grave it seemed to them as if all the colour were gone out of life. Ammanati,

¹ "Take poets for your verses, verse again

My purpose is to mend, not buy your strain."

(Creighton's translation, *History of the Papacy*, vol. iii. p. 350.)

Campano, Goro Lolli, and Cardinal Piccolomini wrote constantly to each other of the happy days that were over. To live again in the memories of "our Pius" became the chief pleasure of their existence.

It is not easy to associate the genial hero of Ammanati's reminiscences with the spiritual suzerainty of the Church or the guardianship of faith and morals. But Pius was never primarily an ecclesiastical personage. He was a man of letters who was also a devout Catholic, and as his office required him to fulfil high ecclesiastical functions, he did so to the best of his ability. Nevertheless, the history of his Pontificate shows that the practical and emotional side of the Catholic faith appealed to him more than its intellectual aspect. His was a religion of the heart and the eye rather than of the intelligence. Even in his most unregenerate days he was content to accept the Creed of the Church without criticism, and he never had the faintest sympathy with heresy. In the first year of his Pontificate, he issued a Bull condemning Reginald Pecock, the heretical Bishop of Chichester, and ordering his writings to be burned.¹ His endeavours to repress incipient heresy in France and Italy afford another example of his stern orthodoxy.² He was curiously uninterested in theological speculation. In 1462 he endeavoured to settle a quarrel which raged between Dominicans and Franciscans by summoning both sides to a disputation in Rome. The account which he gives of the proceedings in the *Commentaries* is clear proof of his indifference with regard to the point at issue.³

On Easter Day 1462, Fra Giacomo della Marca, a prominent Franciscan, maintained in the course of his sermon at Brescia that "the Blood of Christ shed on the ground during the Passion was not an object of worship, since it was separated from the Divine Person." This was an old

¹ Raynaldus, 1459, No. 29.

² Cf. Voigt, vol. iii. pp. 580-3, and Pastor, vol. iii. p. 286.

³ *Commentarii*, lib. xi. pp. 278-92.

subject of dispute, and the Dominicans at once took up the challenge. To Pius it seemed that Fra Giacomo had made a great mistake in raising the question. He fell, said the Pope, into "a common error of popular preachers," and "for the sake of showing his own learning, touched upon many matters which he would have done better to leave alone."¹ But in the interests of peace it was necessary to judge between the disputants, and for three days the matter was argued in the Pope's presence. Afterwards the subject was discussed privately among the Cardinals, of whom the majority sided with the Dominicans. "Pius agreed with the majority, but it did not seem to him a suitable time to publish his decision, lest the numbers of Minorites employed in preaching against the Turk should be offended." So the decision was postponed, to the satisfaction of all parties concerned. The Dominicans realised that the Pope was on their side, and the Franciscans were relieved that judgment had not been given against them. As for Pius, he was content to have ended a quarrel which prevented the two great Mendicant Orders from doing more practical work.

As became a disciple of S. Bernardino, Pius was an enthusiastic patron of the Observantists, the reformed branch of the Franciscan Order. Both at Tivoli and at Sarzana the Conventual Franciscans were ordered to make way for the Observantists, and the privileges granted to the latter by Eugenius IV were revived. The reform of monastic discipline, in general, appealed to the Pope's practical mind, and it was a matter to which he gave great attention. He caused a Chapter of the Dominican Order to be held at Siena to discuss the question of reform, and on finding that the chief cause of abuse was the corrupt General, Martial Auribelle, he deposed him from his office.² The Carmelites of Brescia, the *Humiliati* of Venice, and the convents of the Order of Vallombrosa, all owed some

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. xii. p. 278.

² Cugnoni, p. 224 (omitted from *Commentarii*, lib. x. p. 262).

measure of reform to Pius II, and model communities, such as that of the Benedictines of S. Justina at Padua, were singled out for favour.¹

Thus the humanist Pope proved himself a zealous practical reformer, and he had an artist's love of ritual. No one can read the description of Roman ceremonial which he wrote during his Cardinalate without realising how deeply the ordered beauty of Catholic worship impressed itself upon his soul. "If you once saw the Pope celebrating Mass, or assisting at the Divine Office, you would confess that there is no order, or pomp, or splendour save with the Roman Pontiff. You would see the Pope sitting high upon his throne, the Cardinals on his right, and the great prelates on his left. Bishops, Abbots, Prototaries, ambassadors, all have their place. Here are the Auditors, there the Clerks of the Camera; here the Procurators, there the Subdeacons and Acolytes. Below them are the multitude. Surely you would recognise that the Papal Court resembles the celestial hierarchy, where all is fair to the eye, and all is done according to rule and law." ²

The Sacraments and ceremonies of the Church were, in truth, the centre of Pius II's religious life. His reign is famous for some of the most splendid ecclesiastical ceremonies of the Renaissance, and perhaps the most glorious of all was the Festival of Corpus Christi, as celebrated by the Pope and Cardinals at Viterbo in 1462.³ In an earlier passage of the *Commentaries*, Pius tells the story of the origin of this feast, which had always been peculiarly dear to him. "A certain priest of Bolsena doubted the presence of the divine and human nature of Christ our Saviour in the Sacrament of the altar. One day, while he was celebrating Mass, his faith was compelled by the sight of the Bleeding Host before him, and by the sign of the miraculous Blood upon the corporal in which it lay. This

¹ Cf. Pastor, vol. iii. pp. 277-80.

² *Germania*, p. 1080 (*Opera*).

³ *Commentarii*, lib. viii. pp. 208-11.

miracle was recognised and approved by Pope Urban IV (1263), and the Festival of the Most Blessed Body of Christ was instituted. It has since been celebrated each year with the greatest devotion and honour throughout the whole Christian world.”¹ In 1462, Pius determined to observe the festival with unwonted splendour. The gravest political troubles of his reign were over. He was about to spend a happy summer’s holiday in his beloved Tuscany, and, as he tarried at Viterbo in the bright May weather, everything seemed to combine in the call to rejoice.

The Pope was staying in the Rocca, at the northern end of the town, near the Church of S. Francesco, and from here to the Cathedral the way was one continuous pageant. Rich tapestries of purple and cloth of gold adorned the houses, triumphal arches of flowering broom, myrtle, and laurel spanned the streets. All the trade-guilds of Viterbo combined with the members of the Curia in the work of decoration.² The First Vespers of the Festival were celebrated in a temporary building erected near the Rocca. “The sun was still high, and its rays penetrated through the rainbow-hued hangings. . . . The choir sang as sweetly as angels; the lights were arranged with admirable skill to imitate the starry heaven; the voices blended with the instruments in sweetest harmony; the whole scene resembled Paradise.” Early the next morning a great procession started for the Cathedral. The Pope himself bore the Host, and he was supported by “seventeen Cardinals, twenty-two Bishops, and many other dignitaries.” First on the route came the houses decorated with the magnificent Arras tapestries of the French Cardinals. Near them was a representation of the Last Supper and the Institution of the Eucharist, prepared by Cardinal Torquemada. By the principal group he had placed a figure of S. Thomas Aquinas, “as if he were ordering the due observance of the sacred rite.” Carvajal’s

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. iv. p. III.

² Niccola della Tuccia, *Cronaca di Viterbo*, pp. 84-7.

contribution was a great dragon surrounded by horrible demons, and as the Pope passed by S. Michael appeared in full armour, dispersed the demons, and cut off the dragon's head. As usual, the decorations of Cardinal Borgia surpassed all others in splendour and ingenuity. When the Pope approached Borgia's precincts a large tent covered with purple hangings barred the way, and two boys dressed as angels advanced and sang, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and King Pius will come in." But five kings and a band of soldiers held the entrance. "Who is King Pius?" they cried. "The angels, in honour of the Sacrament which he carried, answered, 'He is the Lord, strong and mighty.' " Immediately the barriers were thrown down, the sound of pipes and organs was heard, and the whole company knelt before the Pope singing songs of welcome. Inside the tent was a fountain flowing with water and wine, symbolising the Blessed Sacrament, besides many other historical and allegorical figures, "which arrested the gaze not only of the ignorant multitude, but of cultivated men." Before the Palazzo del Commune, Cardinal Forteguerria had prepared an elaborate tableau of the Resurrection. The Holy Sepulchre stood in the middle of the Piazza with the soldiers sleeping by it, and near them the watching angels, "who would not suffer the bride-chamber of the heavenly Spouse to be violated." When the Pope drew near, "suddenly a beautiful boy, let down by a rope, descended like an angel from heaven and proclaimed the approaching Resurrection." A breathless silence followed, which was broken by the sound of thunder, and then "he who played the part of the Saviour drew all eyes upon himself." With the banner of the Cross in his hand, and a shining diadem on his head, he announced in Italian verse that the salvation of the world had been won.

Other lesser marvels followed, until at length the Pope reached the Cathedral, where High Mass was celebrated by Cardinal Barbo. When the Pope came out on to the Piazza to bless the people after Mass, a repre-

sentation of the Assumption of the Virgin took place under Cardinal de Mila's auspices. On the housetops was seen the Court of heaven, with God sitting in glory amid stars and choirs of angels. Below, in the Piazza, lay the Virgin's tomb, from whence a lovely maiden rose up to heaven, supported by angelic hands and dropping her girdle as she went. "Her Son came to meet her, and kissed His Mother upon her forehead. He presented her to the Eternal Father, and seated her upon His right hand. Then the legions of celestial spirits sang and exulted and sounded instruments of music. All heaven rejoiced, and so the ceremonies closed." After this the Pope and several of the Cardinals dined with Cardinal de Mila in the adjacent palace, where "pleasant conversation rendered the hours short." Then came a short interval for repose, before Vespers and the return along the processional route. It was a day that lived long in the annals of the city, and no one entered more thoroughly into the spirit of the festival than did the Pope himself. "Whoever visited Viterbo that day," he concludes, "and saw these wonders, must have thought that he had come not to the abode of men but to the realms above, and that he had seen the vision of the celestial city alive and in the flesh." ¹

¹ Cf. for the whole ceremony, *Commentarii*, lib. viii. pp. 208-11, and Niccola della Tuccia, pp. 84-7.

CHAPTER XII

PIENZA AND THE PICCOLOMINI

WHEN Pius II became Pope nothing gave him more genuine pleasure than the thought that his greatness would add to the prosperity and prestige of Siena. "The first care of his pontificate was to serve his country. He went to Siena, and fed his starving people with apostolic nourishment. He filled the city and *contado* with plenty. He established peace in the commonwealth. He allayed fear, both of internal and external foes."¹ This description of the benefits which Pius conferred upon his native city is perhaps more true of his intentions than of his achievements. He meant all that was good by Siena, but unfortunately he differed from the majority of his fellow-citizens with regard to the means by which the internal welfare of the Republic should be promoted. His ideal for the good government of Siena was a constitution in which all the five *Monti* or factions had their share. His first object was to restore his own *Monte dei Gentiluomini* to power, but he also pleaded for the enfranchisement of the *Dodicini*, a faction which included many rich merchant families, and which was at that time wholly deprived of the rights of citizenship.² He was deeply impressed by the evils attending on a city divided against itself. The exiles without the city striving to return, and their friends and relations within, secretly supporting them, undermined the stability of the State. If

¹ *Jacobi Card. Pap.*, Ep. 71, p. 517.

² Cf. *Commentarii*, lib. iv. p. 101.

the Pope could have had his way, the very names of the rival factions would have been abolished, and instead of five warring *Monti* he would have had one people. "The guardian of cities is concord," he pleaded, "and concord will protect this city, and unite you for ever, if only justice, the mother and queen of virtues, is permitted to reign over you." ¹

The wisdom of Pius II's ideals are manifest, but they represented a conception of government altogether foreign to the average citizen of Siena. "What could be more foolish than to admit to membership in the State those who would promptly eject you from it?" ² asked a member of the party in power when Pius II's proposals were debated in the Council. Any idea of broadening the basis of government was abhorrent to the enfranchised classes. Their less fortunate neighbours could only be regarded as enemies, and their object was to depress them by taxation and proscription in order to postpone the evil day when the political situation would be reversed, when the exiles would return to power, and at once proceed to exclude their late oppressors from a share in the government. The citizens of Siena were determined not to enfranchise the nobles, and Pius II was equally determined to have his own way. Thus from first to last the political contest embittered the relations between our hero and his "sweet city." It is true that in the burst of enthusiasm which followed the news of the election of a Sienese Pope, the Piccolomini were at once admitted to full political power. ³ But this was a measure which commended itself to public opinion in Siena, whereas the enfranchisement of the *Gentiluomini* as a class evoked the strongest opposition. When Pius stayed in Siena on his way to Mantua in 1459, the citizens consented to discuss the constitutional question with him, although his requests seemed to them

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 45.

² *Ibid.*, lib. viii. p. 215.

³ Cf. Malavolti, *De' fatti e guerre de' Sanesi*, p. 61, and Thomasius, *Hist. Sen.*, p. 57.

"difficult to refuse, and still more difficult to grant."¹ A compromise was finally arrived at by which the *Gentiluomini* were admitted to all the honours of citizenship, and to a fraction of political power. This decision was hailed with general thanksgiving, and nobles and people embraced one another rapturously in the streets. One and all turned their backs upon a trying controversy, and gave themselves up to rejoicing in the possession of a Sienese Pope, present among them in the flesh. Meanwhile Pius II doled out favours to his fellow-citizens with a generous hand. On Sunday in Mid-Lent, he presented to the Prior of the Republic the golden rose, which is still preserved in the Opera del Duomo at Siena. The fortress of Radicofani, hitherto a bone of contention between Siena and Orvieto, was granted in perpetuity to the Republic. Siena was raised to the dignity of an archbishopric, and proceedings were set on foot for the canonisation of Caterina Benincasa, henceforth to be revered as S. Catherine of Siena.²

It was a happy turn of fortune that enabled one of Siena's two most famous children to be the means of doing honour to the other. S. Catherine, the ascetic visionary and political reformer, belongs to a different world from that of the humanist Pope. But wide as is the gulf which separates them, they are united both by their services to the Papacy and by their love of Siena. Pius II's heart glowed with patriotic pride when, two years later, the formalities were concluded, and he announced to the multitude assembled in S. Peter's that "Catherine's name was written upon the roll of the Saints."³

Meanwhile the quarrel between the Pope and the Republic had broken out afresh. The citizens of Siena regarded the compromise of 1459 as the utmost limit of their concessions to the nobility, while Pius looked upon it

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 46.

² Decrees ordering the Process of Canonisation are to be found at Siena, dated 19 May 1459. The Canonisation was finally announced on 29 June 1461. Cf. Pastor, iii. pp. 290-3.

³ *Commentarii*, lib. v. p. 135.

as a prelude to the grant of more extensive privileges. Thus the intercourse between them consisted mainly in renewed pressure from the Pope, and repeated attempts to evade his requests on the part of the Sienese. At last the citizens persuaded themselves that Pius II's interference was becoming a serious menace to the Republic. The nobles, they insisted, were encouraged by his support to conspire against the government, and the citizens lived in hourly dread of an armed attack. Those of the nobility who remained within the city were threatened with imprisonment or exile if the present state of unrest continued. In despair, they addressed a petition to the Pope, begging him to desist from further efforts on their behalf.¹ This was in the summer of 1462, and Pius showed his displeasure with the Republic by not once entering Siena throughout the course of a long summer holiday in Tuscany. From henceforth he abandoned his attempts at political reform. His last visit to Siena, only a few months before his death, was unspoiled by controversy. Nevertheless, the citizens continued to look upon the nobles with suspicion, and before Pius was cold in his grave the modicum of political power granted to the *Gentiluomini* had been taken away. "It was indeed an unworthy thing," writes a Sienese chronicler, "that the measures brought about by so great a Pope, and by one who had deserved so well of his city, should be rescinded almost immediately after his death."²

Thwarted in his designs for Siena, Pius sought consolation in the advancement of the Piccolomini and in the creation of Pienza. Silvio and Vittoria Piccolomini had not lived to see their son's elevation to the Papacy. At the time of Pius's accession his father had been dead eight years, and his body lay in the little Church of S. Francesco at Corsignano. After four years of widowhood, Vittoria died in Siena, and was buried by the Franciscans of that

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. viii. pp. 214-5.

² F. Thomasius, *Hist. Sen.*, p. 62.

city. Pius now caused a beautiful marble tomb to be erected in the Church of S. Francesco in Siena, and thither the remains of Silvio Piccolomini were brought to rest beside those of his wife.¹ The tomb has since been destroyed by fire, but the medallions of Silvio and Vittoria, with a scroll bearing the inscription which Pius II himself composed, are still to be seen in the Church.²

The Pope's nearest living relations were his two sisters, Laudomia and Caterina, both of whom had made respectable but by no means brilliant marriages. They and their children assumed the name of Piccolomini, and to his nephews and nieces Pius looked to sustain the honour of his family. Caterina was married to a certain Bartolomeo Guglielmi, whom Pius made Prefect of Spoleto, and here the Pope visited his sister on his way to Mantua in 1459. She had an only daughter, Antonia, who in her turn married and had children. In 1462, Antonia and Caterina came to see Pius at Todi, bringing with them Antonia's baby-boy, a handsome, intelligent child, who "gave no small delight to the Pope." "He had not yet reached his twentieth month," said the proud uncle, "but he imitated everything which he saw, and gave many signs of future wisdom."³ The child was called Silvio at the Pope's desire. He became the ancestor of the famous Marshal Ottavio Piccolomini, who played so prominent a part in the Thirty Years War. Laudomia was married to Nanni Todeschini, and by him had four sons and one daughter, Montanina. Of the Pope's four nephews, Antonio, Giacomo, and Andrea were destined for a secular, and Francesco for an ecclesiastical career. Francesco was a studious, well-conducted youth, and when Æneas was Bishop of Siena he saw sufficient intellectual promise in his nephew to think it worth while

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 47.

² "Silvius hic jaceo, conjux Vittoria mecum est
Filius hoc clausit marmore. Papa Pius."

Cf. *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 47.

³ *Ibid.*, lib. x. p. 272. The fine palace in Siena now occupied by the Banca d'Italia was built as the Pope's gift to Caterina.

sending him to the University of Perugia. Money was always scanty in the Piccolomini family, and Francesco, like Æneas before him, economised his expenses by lodging with relations. But, unlike Æneas, his future was ready made for him from the moment of taking his degree. In January 1460, at the age of twenty-one, he became Archbishop of Siena, and two months later he received a Cardinal's hat. He proved himself a devoted nephew, and filled with credit the various high offices to which he was called. Yet he could not rise above his destiny, and he remained to the last the nephew of Pius II, a pale reflection of his brilliant uncle. His chief claim to the remembrance of posterity is as the founder of the Piccolomini Library in the Cathedral at Siena. The original purpose of the building was to hold the works of Pius II and his treasured collection of books. It was begun about the year 1492, and decorated on a comparatively modest scale. Ten years later, Cardinal Piccolomini determined to make the Library a worthy monument of his uncle, and engaged Pintoricchio to decorate it with a series of frescoes illustrating the life of Pius II, "with such personages, action, and costumes as are necessary and convenient for the proper portrayal thereof."¹ The work had not advanced far when Cardinal Piccolomini became Pope Pius III, and died in October 1503, after a reign of two months. While Pius III slept beside Pius II in S. Peter's, Pintoricchio laboured in the Piccolomini Library, and the completed work served as a memorial of both uncle and nephew. The large fresco over the entrance to the Library from the Cathedral commemorates the coronation of Pius III. Upon the walls of the Library itself, Pintoricchio has told in ten scenes, alive with light and joy and colour, the life-story of the humanist Pope.²

¹ Cf. Corrado Ricci, *Pintoricchio*.

² The subjects of these famous frescoes are as follows:—1. "Æneas starting for the Council of Basel"; 2. "The Mission to Scotland"; 3. "Coronation as Poet by Frederick III"; 4. "The Reconciliation with Eugenius IV"; 5. "The Betrothal of Frederick III and Leonora of Portugal"; 6. "Æneas made a Cardinal by Calixtus III"; 7. "The

Antonio Piccolomini did not share the studious tastes of his brother, and in less prosperous days, when a learned career seemed likely to offer him his best chance in life, he was a cause of serious anxiety to his father and uncle. "We understand that Antonio is no scholar, and is doing little good," wrote Æneas to Nanni Todeschini in September 1453. "We gathered as much from his letters, which are execrably written. We trust that he will mend his ways, and at least learn to express himself better."¹ Luckily for this young scapegrace, his uncle's election to the Papacy enabled him to cast aside his books and to enter upon a military career. He was at once made Castellan of S. Angelo, an office which gave him high military authority in Rome. When the war broke out, he led the Papal forces in the Neapolitan kingdom, and won an honourable reputation as a soldier. In 1461 he was married to Maria of Aragon, the illegitimate daughter of King Ferrante, and became Duke of Amalfi and Grand Justiciar of Naples. Thus the idle boy of the family entered the ranks of the princes of Italy, and there seemed no limit to the possibilities which lay before him.

Provision was also made for the two younger brothers, Giacomo and Andrea. Giacomo was given the little lordship of Camporsevoli near Chiusi, and on the break-up of the Malatesta dominions he became Duke of Montemarciano, in the March of Ancona. To Andrea fell the Tuscan dominion of Castiglione della Pescaja with the island of Giglio, granted to him by Ferrante of Naples. He played a considerable part in the politics of Siena, and his daughter Vittoria married Borghese Petrucci, the son of the famous Pandolfo. In the next generation Andrea's granddaughter and heiress, Silvia, married her cousin, the Duke of Amalfi, thus uniting the two branches of the family.²

Election of Pius II "; 8. "The Congress of Mantua "; 9. "The Canonisation of S. Catherine of Siena "; 10. "Pius II at Ancona."

¹ Cf. Voigt, vol. iii. p. 28; and Wolkan, Ep. 37.

² Cf. Litta, *Famiglie Celebri d'Italia: Piccolomini*.

Meanwhile Antonio, Duke of Amalfi, pursued his splendid career. He was undoubtedly the favourite nephew, and he came in for a large share of the Malatesta dominions on the fall of Sigismondo. Sinigaglia and Mondavio passed into his possession, and it was rumoured that Pius II dreamed of a strong State in the March of Ancona under the rule of Antonio. The Pope's death put an end to such schemes, if they ever existed. Paul II left Antonio in possession of his fiefs in the March, but the election of Sixtus IV forced him to make way for the new Pope's ambitious nephews. Thereupon he retired to Naples, where he continued to enjoy high favour with Ferrante. His successors were distinguished by their loyalty to the Aragonese dynasty in Naples, and they later became the devoted servants of the Emperor Charles V. On the death of Antonio's last male descendant, in 1566, the Duchy of Amalfi was given by the Spanish Crown to Marshal Ottavio, who once more made the name of Piccolomini famous throughout Europe.¹

In Siena, to-day, the graceful *Lôggia del Papa* stands as a permanent memorial to the love and care which Pius II lavished upon his family. "Pius II Pont. Max. gentilibus suis Piccolomineis" runs the inscription: "Pope Pius II to his relations the Piccolomini." Family pride and family affection taught him to regard his own brilliant career in the light of a tribute to the honour of that name.

Throughout the years of his crowded life Pius II never forgot Corsignano. "When you go to Corsignano," he wrote to his father in 1444, "greet the old friends in my name, and especially my nurse Bartolomea, if she is still alive. Her husband Berte is, I imagine, no longer in the land of the living."² A letter written to the Republic of Siena from Rome, during his Cardinalate, shows how near the interests of the little community lay to the heart of

¹ Litta, *op. cit.*

² Æneas Silvius to Silvio Piccolomini, 19 Nov. 1444 (Voigt, *Briefe*, No. 130, p. 358; and Wolkan, Ep. 162).



LOGGIA DEL PAPA
SIENA

Æneas Silvius. His object was to ask that Corsignano might be excused payment of a tax of three hundred ducats. "We were born and brought up in Corsignano," he writes, "and we love the inhabitants as our fellow-townsmen. We pray you, therefore, to consider them as commended to your favour on our account. As we learn that they are poor and unable to bear this burden, it would be most welcome to us if they obtained some remission by means of our letters, so that they may know that they are benefited by our love."¹ But the time was now at hand when Æneas would be able to give his native village a far more splendid proof of his affection. When Pius II set out for the Congress of Mantua in January 1459, the scheme for the creation of Pienza must already have been in his mind. On 21 February, Corsignano learned that the Pope and six Cardinals were in the neighbourhood and might be expected to enter the village at midday. Nothing could exceed the enthusiasm with which Pius was welcomed. The inhabitants had done their utmost to make ready for the occasion, and Laudomia and Caterina Piccolomini, with their husbands and children and various other members of the family, were gathered to welcome him. Among the crowd which pressed forward to receive the Papal blessing was the old priest Piero, eager to recognise in his spiritual sovereign the little Æneas whom he had taught in bygone years.

Next day was the Feast of S. Peter's Chair, and Pius II celebrated Mass in the Church of S. Francesco. The commemoration of S. Peter's installation as the chief of the Apostles took on a new significance to these simple Tuscan peasants, when S. Peter's successor was present in their midst, in the person of their friend and fellow-citizen, Æneas Silvius Piccolomini. Pius, however, could not revisit the place of his birth without a certain sense of

¹ Cf. Mannucci, *Fondazione della Cattedrale di Pienza (Arte e Storia*, Anno xxiv. (1905); Numero unico pubblicato in occasione del v° centenario della nascita di Enea Silvio Piccolomini).

sadness, and with characteristic craving for self-expression he has left a record of the conflicting emotions which beset him.¹ He had looked forward with the keenest anticipation to revisiting the old haunts and talking with the friends of his childhood. Yet when he found himself at Corsignano his joy was overshadowed by sorrow at the changes which time had wrought. Many of his friends were dead, others were confined to their houses by old age or ill-health, those from whom he had parted as boys had grown-up children of their own, and were so altered that he hardly recognised them. There were few with whom time had dealt more hardly than it had with Pius II himself. Although only in his fifty-fourth year, he was already an old man. Long years of ceaseless activity had made his head bald before its time and had furrowed his face with wrinkles. His gouty feet could scarcely bear the weight of his body. He had a chronic cough, and was rarely free from pain. Yet his bright eyes revealed an energy of spirit which could still triumph over bodily infirmity: in his power of enjoyment and zest for living he possessed the secret of perpetual youth.

Before Pius left Corsignano he had made the necessary arrangements for the execution of his great project. The Florentine, Bernardo Rossellino, was engaged as architect, and Siena contributed her share to the undertaking by allowing wood to be brought from the famous forests of Monte Amiata, which had furnished building materials for many houses in Rome.² Some eighteen months later, on his return from Mantua, Pius paid a second visit to the village, in order to see how the work progressed. He found that the church and palace which he had planned were already rising from their foundations, and that they gave promise of being "unsurpassed by any building in Italy."³ But the Pope could not linger to watch their growth.

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. ii. p. 44.

² Mannucci, *Fondazione della Cattedrale di Pienza (Arte e Storia*, 1905).

³ *Commentarii*, lib. iv. p. 110.

He was detained at Corsignano for twelve days by a severe chill which affected all his limbs and made him unable to move without help, but directly he could leave his bed he hastened on to Rome, in order to quell the disturbances which had arisen during his long absence. The Pope's affection for Tuscany was regarded with suspicion by the Romans, and in the following summer Pius found it wiser to spend his *villegiatura* in the Papal States. Thus it was not until 1462 that he was free to gratify his own taste. The month of July in that year saw him established in the Abbey of S. Salvatore on the slopes of Monte Amiata, from whence he could watch the city of his dreams as it rose into being upon the opposite hill-side.

When this glad day arrived, Corsignano was no more. A Consistory held on 12 February 1462, had bequeathed to it a new name, and had pronounced that in honour of its patron it should be known henceforth as Pienza.¹ At the same time, the all but completed church was raised to the rank of a Cathedral, and Pienza with her neighbour, Montalcino, was taken from the diocese of Arezzo to form a new bishopric. After a few weeks of tranquillity, spent with the monks of S. Salvatore, Pius crossed the Val d'Orcia, to see for himself what progress had been made at Pienza. Once more he came to his home ill and suffering, and he was obliged to postpone his inspection of the new buildings for several days. When at last he made the tour of the Cathedral and palace, all his pains were forgotten in his joy over the fair vision which rose before him. With paternal pride he observed every detail of the work. The size and number of the windows in the palace, the arrangements for carrying off water from the roof, the decorations of the walls and ceilings in the various rooms are all chronicled by the enthusiastic Pope. No less minute is his account of the Cathedral, complete now in all its fittings, from the two holy-water basins at the bottom of

¹ Pius II to the Priors of the Republic of Siena, 12 Feb. 1462. Cf. Mannucci, *Arte e Storia*, 1905.

the nave to the beautiful *intarsiatura* of the choir-stalls. An artist's eye for beauty, the pride and joy of a lover combine with the practical wisdom and capacity for detail of a man of affairs to render the pages of the *Commentaries* which describe Pienza the most vivid in the book. Moreover, the description of 1462 still holds good. Owing to the completeness of the original scheme and to a blessed freedom from the ravages of the spoiler, the *Commentaries* are the best guide-book to Pienza as it is to-day.¹

Few who visit the tiny city, a fair flower of the Renaissance blooming in a land that is eternally mediæval, will deny that Pius had just cause to be proud of his creation. On the west side of the red-brick Piazza lies the massive pile of the Palazzo Piccolomini. Severe and yet not forbidding, decorative and yet not ornate, it is a perfect example of the domestic architecture of the early Renaissance, unsurpassed by the finest palaces in Siena or Florence. It is a square building, standing three storeys high, and fashioned of solid stone. Round its base runs a broad stone ledge, where the inhabitants lounge when they gather on the Piazza to laugh and gossip after Mass on feast-days, or in the evening when the day's work is done. After the usual Italian model, the palace is built round a central court: a small door gives access to it from the Piazza, while the principal entrance lies on the north side. On the right of the main entrance a staircase "of some forty easy steps" leads to the first floor and to the principal apartments. "Here," says Pius, "are winter and summer rooms, and those suited to the mean seasons." The bedrooms are "fit for kings," and "not a single room lacks a fire-place or anything which could add to its comfort and convenience." The fine panelled ceilings, the floors of polished tiles, and the tasteful use of paint and gilding contribute to the general excellence of the effect. A distinctive feature of the palace are the spacious windows, "each large enough to allow three people to look out at once." "Truly,"

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. ix. pp. 231-6.

exclaims the Pope, "if, as all will agree, light is the chief grace of a house, then no dwelling is to be preferred to this, which is open to four prospects of the heavens, and which admits abundant light both from windows on the outer side of the palace and from those giving on the courtyard." Of the many splendid apartments the most attractive is the great hall overlooking the Val d'Orcia, which, with a small room leading out of it at either end, occupies the entire first floor on the south side of the square. The richly carved chimneypiece of white stone which Pius mentions is still in its place, and two doors lead straight from the hall to the graceful *loggia*, "a most pleasant abode in the winter season." Pius occupied the adjoining room on the east, where his frescoed portrait still adorns the wall. Thus he could pass straight from his bed-chamber, through the great hall, to the *loggia*, where he loved to sit and feast his eye upon the familiar landscape, while the September sun bathed his limbs as it pierced the mists of an autumn morning. On the ground floor a corresponding *loggia* gives access to the garden. This is a square enclosure levelled with some ingenuity on the slope of the hill-side, a sunny bower, fragrant with basil and rosemary, hanging over the wild Val d'Orcia. For the Pope's gouty limbs, steps and slopes were a matter of some inconvenience. Thus he appreciated to the full the admirable engineering which enabled him to pass from the great north entrance, through the courtyard and *loggia*, to the terrace at the far end of the garden, "with smooth step, not once having to raise his feet."

At right angles to the Palazzo Piccolomini, on the southern side of the Piazza, rises Pius II's other great foundation, the Cathedral of the Blessed Virgin. "Against custom, and at the dictates of necessity," as Pius puts it, what should be the east end of the Cathedral faces south over the Val d'Orcia, while the main entrance lies north and not west, fronting the Piazza. The façade of grey stone, severely classical in form, produces an impression

of coldness. No reliefs or statues break the lines of the columns and arches, and the circular design, framing the Piccolomini arms surmounted by the crossed keys and Papal tiara, which Pius describes as a "Cyclop's eye," is a poor compensation for other ornament. Inside the Cathedral this impression of coldness and severity is entirely dissipated, and the whole scheme of decoration bears witness to the taste and forethought of its founder. By the Pope's express desire the nave and the aisles on either side of it are of equal height. He had seen churches in Austria built on this model and had noticed the greater facilities for light which it afforded. So successful was his experiment that when he first visited the Cathedral and saw the sun streaming in through the great windows, he seemed to be entering "a house of glass and not a house of stone." Pius also insisted that the walls of the Cathedral should be left plain, without frescoes or other decoration which would mar the pristine whiteness of the stone. Only in the chapels, forming the apse behind the high altar, were pictures allowed, executed at the Pope's order by "the best masters which Siena could produce." By a Bull of 16 September 1462, Pius forbade, on pain of excommunication only revocable by Papal authority, any additions to his original scheme.¹ Thus the Cathedral remains to-day as he planned it. The severe simplicity of the walls forms an impressive setting to the elegant grace of the eight clustered columns which support the nave. The roof above is painted a deep blue, spangled with golden stars, in imitation of the open heavens so dear to the heart of the Pope. There, too, in the chapels for which they were originally painted, hang the altar-pieces by the Sienese masters of the Quattrocento—Vecchietta, Sano di Pietro, and Matteo di Giovanni. Set thus against their true background, the pictures preserve that distinction and vitality which all but the very highest works of art are prone to lose when crowded together on the walls

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. ix. p. 235.



CATHEDRAL (INTERIOR)

PIENZA

of an Academy. Vecchietta's Assumption ranks among the artist's masterpieces. Surrounded by a galaxy of dancing angels, the majestic figure of the Madonna rises heavenwards, while Pope Pius I, S. Catherine of Siena, and two other saints bear witness to her ascent. All three pictures breathe the spirit of devotion and patriotism in which they were painted. The most interesting historically is that of Matteo di Giovanni, in which the Madonna sits enthroned among the four Fathers of the Church. Here, in the kneeling figure of Gregory the Great, we recognise the strongly marked features and keen, smiling eyes of Pius II.

Underneath the main building is a lower church, which serves as a Baptistery, and which contains a handsome font of Rossellino's design. The contrast between this graceful structure and the massive basin, looking almost like a drinking trough, in the Church of SS. Vito e Modesto, where Æneas was baptized, is the contrast between the Renaissance and the mediæval world. To the west of the Cathedral stands a house, now used as a museum, which the Pope destined for the Dean and Chapter. A small door into the Cathedral was made for their use, through which "they might pass without hindrance to the day and night offices." The same practical forethought shows itself in the two splendid wells, both designed by Rossellino, and complete down to the very chains and buckets when Pius made his tour of inspection. One, standing in the garden of the Palazzo, was intended to supply the needs of the household, while the other was placed in the Piazza for the use of the citizens. Both wells are in working to-day, and the richly carved head and massive bucket of the Piazza well may be seen in a setting of flapping straw hats, gay scarves, and chattering voices, as the women of Pienza come daily to draw water and to bless the name of Pius II, who provided so generously for the needs of his people.

Such were the new buildings of Pienza as Pius saw them in the summer of 1462. As might be expected, the archi-

tect had greatly exceeded his original estimate. Endless difficulties had been experienced in laying the foundations of the Cathedral in the crumbling volcanic soil, and various other accidents had occurred. Many persons were ready to blame the architect, and to accuse him of gross carelessness and extravagance, if not of actual fraud. Pius, however, turned a deaf ear to their complaints. Sending for the architect, he praised him for the miscalculation which had produced such happy results. "You have done well, Bernardo, in deceiving us as to the expense of the work. If you had told us the truth, you would never have persuaded us to spend so much money; and neither this noble palace nor this church, the finest in all Italy, would now be standing."

Pius was enchanted with the result of Bernardo's labours, yet he could not blind himself to the fact that he had spent far more on Pienza than he could justify. At the same time, his scheme was not yet fully carried out. He therefore determined to shift at least a part of the future expense on to other shoulders. Having bought and pulled down some small houses on the north side of the Piazza, he presented the site to the Commune in order that the citizens might build themselves a suitable Palazzo Pubblico. How well they responded to the task may be seen to-day in the graceful little building, with its elegant *loggia* and red brick tower, which stands opposite to the Cathedral. Pius, moreover, resolved to transform Pienza into the summer capital of the Papacy; and the Cardinals were asked, or rather politely commanded, to build palaces in the city. The Pope's best hope lay in Cardinal Borgia, whose riches were as great as his complaisance, and who had sufficient worldly wisdom to accept the inevitable in a graceful spirit. Borgia professed himself much honoured by the Pope's gift of the old communal buildings, and ere long he had transformed them into an elegant Renaissance palace, furnished with the sumptuous luxury for which he was famed. This palace is now the residence of the

Bishop, and it lies opposite to the Palazzo Piccolomini, with the Cathedral and the Palazzo Pubblico on its left and right. With its erection Pius II's ideal was realised. The Piazza called by his name was enclosed by four noble buildings, and there was not a single blot upon the harmonious perfection of the group.

Other Cardinals responded with less alacrity to the Pope's appeal. Young Francesco Gonzaga, the son of the Marquis of Mantua, who had obtained his Cardinal's hat only a few months before, was most reluctant to embark upon so great an outlay. Yet he desired above all things to obtain the Bishopric of Mantua when next it fell vacant, and Pius II's hint that, unless he were more obliging, the Bishopric might be given to another, at once induced him to obey. In a letter dated 28 August 1462 he begs his father to help him in meeting this expense, assuring him that it is absolutely necessary to do what the Pope requires, and that it must be done, moreover, without delay.¹ In spite of the pressure put upon him, Francesco does not appear to have done more than buy a piece of ground for future use. The building of his palace had not yet begun when the Pope's death came to spare the needy Mantuan from further expense.

In Jacopo Ammanati, Cardinal of Pavia, the Pope found a kindred spirit who soon rivalled Pius himself in his affection for Pienza. Three years after the Pope's death he wrote an enthusiastic letter to Goro Lolli, inviting him to visit the city which had become his home. "What wonder," he exclaims, "if my retreat at Pienza delights me!" The good air, the fine views, the pleasant shady walks, and the warm welcome which he receives from the Cathedral clergy, all combine to attract him thither. Hunting and fishing abound, "better wine is not to be had in all Tuscany," his house is well built and commodious. Above all, "the remembrance of our Pius" enhances the charm of these

¹ Francesco Bandini Piccolomini, *Le Case Borgia e Gonzaga in Pienza* (*Arte e Storia*, 1905).

delights. "Here he was born, here he received baptism, here he left traces of his holy footprints. Wherever the eye turns there are memorials of his name." Out of gratitude towards his friend and benefactor, Ammanati has resolved to fulfil his dying wish, and, "forsaking all other places, to delight in Pienza alone."¹

Pius II came to Pienza early in August 1462, and on the 29th of that month the Cathedral was consecrated with due ceremony. The weeks slipped by, summer merging into autumn, and still the Pope lingered on. S. Matthew's Day (21 September) found him still in the Palazzo Piccolomini, throwing himself with whole-hearted zest into Pienza's annual fair. The festivities began with High Mass in the Cathedral, celebrated in the Pope's presence before a large and devout congregation. Then the whole multitude flocked outside the town, to feast at Pius II's expense in the large tents which he had provided for the occasion. No less than thirty oxen were slaughtered for the banquet, and every inhabitant ate and drank his full. The feasting ended, "every one gave themselves to buying and selling until evening," when a variety of races terminated the day's programme. There were horse races, donkey races, and foot races for both men and boys. "These the Pope watched, not without pleasure, from a high window of the palace, whither he had retired with his Cardinals to transact public business."² The affairs of the Church caused Pius II grave anxiety, and at times the weight of his cares seemed too heavy to be borne. Yet he possessed the power of throwing those cares aside, and such mild excitements as the contests for the *palio* at Pienza could be to him the source of purest pleasure. He

¹ *Jacobi Card. Pap. Epistolae*, No. 278, p. 660. Cf. *Arte e Storia*, 1905.

² Cugnoni, p. 222: "Haec Pontifex ex altissima fenestra cum Cardinalibus, non sine jucunditate spectavit, quamvis interea de publicis negotiis auscultaret." The over-decorous editor of the *Commentaries* has emended the original MS. thus: "Haec Pontifex non spectavit: sed cum Cardinalibus interea de publicis negotiis consultabat" (*Commentarii*, lib. ix. p. 236).

joined in the general laugh which arose when a riderless donkey came first to the winning post, and the judges awarded it the *palio*. His heart swelled with pride when a plucky Pienza lad bore off a fat goose, the prize for the boys' race, and was forthwith carried round the town upon the shoulders of his exultant friends.

The longest of summer holidays must end one day, and when October came, the Pope bade farewell to Pienza and started on his leisurely journey back to Rome. He hoped that this would be the first of many pleasant *villeggiature* in his old home, but in all probability he never saw Pienza again. In the spring of 1464 he was once more in Tuscany, and he spent Easter at Siena. By that time, however, he had made the desperate resolve to embark in person on a Crusade against the Turk. The chief object of his sojourn in Tuscany was to gain such measure of health at the baths of Petrioli as would enable his rapidly weakening frame to endure the fatigues and hardships which lay before him. It is possible that he took the opportunity to return to Pienza for a few days, but the absence of any record of his visit enables us to ring the curtain down on that October morning, when the shadows which darkened his last months of life had not yet closed over him, and when he could look back on the fair group of buildings on the hill-side, where the old white house of his childhood had stood, with pleasant memories of a successful holiday, and no less pleasant expectations of good days still to come.

From that day forward the veil of oblivion was drawn over Pienza. For a few brief weeks she had been the centre of Christendom, the very Renaissance Rome that Pius would fain have made her. Then she relapsed, deserted and forgotten, into the slumber of decay. During four long centuries her slumber was unbroken, and those who visited her some twenty or thirty years ago spoke of her as a mere memory of vanished glories. To John Addington Symonds her condition seemed "something

worse than ruin." The Piccolomini palace, rarely visited by its owners, had become "a granary for country produce in a starveling land," and the predominant impression which the place produced was one of almost sordid failure.¹ But for those who seek out Pienza to-day a better fate is in store. Within the last few years a happy turn of fortune has brought the Piccolomini back to Pienza. The Palazzo has been tastefully restored, and is now once more the centre of life in the little community. As in the days of Pius II, the citizens have been encouraged by the example of the *Signori* to do their part in the work of restoration. The Palazzo Pubblico has been redecorated and freed from ugly modern additions, and the various treasures belonging to the Cathedral have been collected in a small museum. Pienza, in short, has awakened from her long sleep, determined to prove worthy of her heritage. The culmination of her revival came in 1905, when the quincentenary of Pius II's birth was celebrated with every honour that the citizens could devise. The prime mover in the festivities which marked the occasion was Conte Silvio Piccolomini, the present representative of the race with which the fortunes of Pienza are associated.

Thus Pienza to-day is much more than a memory. She has had her part in the general resurrection of Italy, and, in rising to a vigorous modern life, she has learned to be proud of her past greatness. More than ever, in her new-found consciousness, is she the city of Pius II. His spirit hovers in the starry vaulting of the Cathedral, it mingles with the stir and laughter of the Piazza, and perhaps most of all it lingers in the sunny colonnades of the *loggia* overlooking the Val d'Orcia. The Piccolomini arms (argent, cross azure, charged with five crescents or), surmounted by the crossed keys and Papal tiara, meet the eye at every turn. The objects treasured in the little museum are nearly all Pius II's personal possessions, or gifts which he made to the Cathedral. Here are the tapestries of Flemish

¹ Symonds, *Italian Byways*.



COPE PRESENTED TO PIUS II BY THOMAS PALÆOLOGUS
PIENZA MUSEUM

workmanship which he gave to adorn the Piazza on feast-days. Here are his mitre, ring, and pastoral staff. Here, above all, is the famous cope which has brought visitors to Pienza who know little or nothing of its founder. This marvel of embroidery is worked with twenty-five scenes from the life of the Blessed Virgin and that of S. Catherine of Alexandria, interwoven with every imaginable device of birds and flowers and foliage. Alive with dramatic feeling and glowing with colour, the minute perfection of the workmanship has caused it to be described as "a web woven by an embroidery needle."¹ It was fashioned, in all probability, by English hands in the thirteenth century, and it passed, we know not by what means, into the possession of Thomas Palæologus, Despot of Morea. In his desperate flight from the East, Thomas brought the cope with him to Rome, and presented it to Pius II, from whom alone in Western Europe he could hope for succour against the Turk. Pius ranked it among his most priceless possessions. Therefore it found its last resting-place at Pienza, the city upon which he lavished all the best that he had to offer, the shrine upon which he laid his heart.

¹ Schippisi, *Terre Toscane*, p. 41.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MAN OF LETTERS

ÆNEAS SILVIUS played many parts in the course of his career, and a supple disposition enabled him to play each in turn with some degree of credit. But there was one rôle which made no demands upon his adaptability. He was a diplomatist, a statesman, an ecclesiastic by necessity; he was a man of letters by nature. In the preface to his first historical work, the *Commentaries on the Council of Basel*, he gives a picturesque account of his efforts to wean himself from literary pursuits.¹ His friends urged him to "reject the còdices of orators and historians," and to flee all manner of letters. "Are you not ashamed, at your age, to possess neither lands nor money?" they said. "Do you not know that it behoves a man to be strong at twenty, wise at thirty, and rich at forty, and that he who passes these limits strives in vain?" Æneas recognised the wisdom of their advice, but he was quite unable to follow it. Over and over again he determined to "live no more from day to day as the birds and beasts," but to employ himself in making provision for his old age. Yet, as moths flutter round a candle until they are burnt in the flame, so he returned to his hurt and to his undoing, until he foresaw that naught but death would release him from the toils of literature.

His instinct did not play him false. Poems and essays, letters and orations poured forth from his pen without

¹ *Commentariorum . . . de Gestis Basiliensis Concilii (Opera)*, p. I.

intermission throughout the course of his life. In the five years which followed the writing of the preface quoted above, Æneas's literary productions included a novel, a comedy, many poems, and treatises on such different subjects as the Authority of General Councils, the Nature and Care of Horses, Fortune, Education, and the Miseries of Courtiers. As behoves a true humanist, he was interested in everything, and at no period were his writings confined to any one class of subject. Nevertheless, his literary development has three distinct phases. Like most clever young men, he began by writing poetry. Later on the exigencies of his profession made him an essayist and pamphleteer. In the end he found his true vocation as an historian.

We learn from Goro Lolli that Æneas was a prolific writer of verse in his student days. Some of his poems were in Latin, others were in Italian, and framed on the model of Petrarch. These youthful efforts were treasured by the faithful Goro, who informed Ammanati, after Pius II's death, that he had "almost innumerable examples" in his possession.¹ But they were not included in the printed editions of Pius II's works, and are for the most part lost to posterity. Before he left Siena Æneas wrote a poem entitled "Nymphilexis" in praise of one Battista, the mistress of Socino Benzi of Ferrara. It consisted, said the proud author, of "more than two thousand lines," but it has not survived to allow us to judge of its merits.² During his early days at the Imperial Court the newly crowned poet addressed many verses to Frederick III. Among them were poems "in praise of Cæsar," and a hymn on the Passion in Sapphic metre.³ Chancellor Schlick was also honoured in his protégé's verse, and Æneas's most ambitious effort at this period was a Latin comedy, in the style of

¹ *Jacobi Card. Pap.*, Ep. 47, p. 494.

² Æneas Silvius to Socino Benzi, 1431 (*Wolkan*, Ep. 3; *Opera*, Ep. 35).

³ Cugnoni, pp. 342-70, gives these and other of Æneas's poems.

Terence, entitled *Chrisis*.¹ The German Court, however, was not fruitful soil for poetry, and as Æneas became engrossed in his profession he ceased to cultivate the poetic muse. From henceforth he only wrote occasional verse, epigrams on current events, love poems, or epitaphs in honour of departed friends. His quick sympathies combined with refined taste and facility of expression to render him an adept in the art of epitaph-making. The fine inscription which can still be seen on the tomb of Nicholas v, in the crypts of the Vatican, is a conspicuous example of his talent.

During his Pontificate Pius II composed hymns to the Blessed Virgin and to S. Catherine of Siena, and he also drew up the Office appointed to be said on S. Catherine's Day (5 May). The solemn Litany which closed the Congress of Mantua was the Pope's composition, and various other opportunities presented themselves for the exercise of his poetic gifts. Nevertheless, meagre as are the survivals of Æneas's art, they are sufficient to show that he was in no sense a poet. He writes as a clever man of letters, as a scholar and a stylist, but his poems lack spontaneity. They are at best skilfully fashioned conceits, untouched by the divine fire. The vein of true poetry which he undoubtedly possessed appears not in his verse, but in the unique and altogether charming descriptions of natural scenery which are interspersed among his prose writings. "It was the month of May, and everything was growing; the fields rejoiced, the woods were alive with the song of birds." So wrote Pius II when he was borne over the vast stretches of the Campagna, "golden with flowering broom," and gay in its mantle of spring flowers, "now purple, now white, and now a thousand other hues."² During his sojourn at Viterbo "the Pope went out almost every day

¹ Cf. Æneas Silvius to Michael Pfullendorf, 1 Oct. 1444 (Wolkan, Ep. 158, and *Opera*, Ep. 97). The hitherto unpublished MS. of *Chrisis* is being prepared for publication by Dr. Wolkan.

² *Commentarii*, lib. viii. p. 206.

in the early morning before it was hot, to breathe the fragrant air, and to view the growing crops. The blue flax imitated the colour of heaven, and gave the greatest delight to those who saw it. Nowhere but at Viterbo are there so many and such vast fields of flax. The Pope wandered everywhere, among meadows and sown land, choosing different paths every day.”¹ Again, it is the poet who speaks in Pius II’s description of Nemi and her deep blue waters, so clear “that they reflect the image of the gazer,” and which earned from the ancients the title of the Mirror of Diana. The lake, he says, lies hidden in a deep valley, and the surrounding slopes are a veritable forest of fruit trees. “Some slopes are covered with chestnuts and others with hazels. There are diverse kinds of apple, and below them the humble medlar, and trees which bear pears, plums, and quinces.” A road runs all round the lake, rambling through cool glades where the sun’s rays cannot penetrate. “There is no more pleasant place in summer than these shady paths. It is the meet haunt of poets; nowhere would the poetic flame be kindled if it slumbered here. It is the home of the Muses, the hiding-place of nymphs. True is the legend which tells us that it is Diana’s bower.”² The man who could write thus had the poet’s vision if he had not the poet’s lyre. These descriptions of Italian scenery are prose idylls, springing from the heart of a lover.

Among his contemporaries Æneas was probably most celebrated as a pamphleteer. In the course of his career he wrote a series of tracts upon the great ecclesiastical question of the day, the position and authority of General Councils. The cycle begins with his unqualified championship of the Conciliar theory in the *Dialogues* composed at Basel (1440),³ and it does not terminate until 1463, when the Bull *In minoribus agentes* proclaimed his final repudiation of the “Basel heresy.” Between these two

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. viii. p. 207.

² *Ibid.*, lib. xi. p. 307.

³ Cf. above, p. 68.

extremes lie letters, essays, dialogues, and Bulls, which treat of the same subject from many and diverse points of view. Æneas's letter to his friend Hartung von Keppel¹ and his dialogue entitled *Pentalogus*² both belong to the year 1443. Here the author is still firm on the general principle of the Conciliar movement, but he holds no brief for the Council of Basel. He is the servant of the Emperor, and the apologist of German neutrality, who discusses the quarrel between Pope and Council from the point of view of an onlooker. The special object of the *Pentalogus* was to advocate the summons of a fresh Council, or Congress of princes, for the purpose of judging between the combatants.

Three years later, in 1446, Æneas wrote the tract *De Ortu et authoritate Romani Imperii*, which is in some respects the most important of the series.³ By this time our hero had declared himself decisively on the side of the Papacy. He had made his own peace with Eugenius IV, and was about to enter upon those delicate negotiations which brought Germany to the feet of the Pope. Thus his main object was to impart some degree of self-confidence to the timorous Emperor, lest he should spoil the plans of the Papal party by an abject submission to the princes.⁴ In form, the *De Ortu* is no mere pamphlet, but a treatise on political science. Beginning with a philosophical account of the origin of the State, he shows that men were led by reason first to ordered society, and then to kingship, as the sole means of restraining their selfish passions. "Thus the kingly power of Rome which we call the Holy Roman Empire derives its origin from that same human reason which is the source of all good living, and which all must obey." His conception of the State is no other than the mediæval theory of the Holy Roman

¹ Cf. above, p. 84.

² Cf. above, p. 75.

³ Printed in Goldast, *Monarchia*, T. ii. p. 1558. Cf. p. 110, above.

⁴ Cf. Voigt, i. p. 352. Meusel, *Enea Silvio als Publicist*, finds the origin of the tract in motives purely personal to the author; but his personal and political interests were identical at this period.

Empire, in which Pope and Emperor rule as twin powers, supreme in their respective spheres. The treatise is based on the works of mediæval publicists—S. Thomas Aquinas, Engelbert, and Jordanus of Osnabrück—while it borrows largely from Nicholas of Cusa. Cicero is its chief authority among the ancients, and there are traces of the influence of Sallust, Seneca, and Boethius. Its distinguishing feature is an unhesitating assertion of Imperial absolutism. For the first time in German history the Holy Roman Emperor is invested with the absolute authority of the Cæsars. He is “lord of laws,” and it is “of grace” alone if he allows himself to be bound by them. All limitations on his authority are invalid; there is no appeal from his sentence; all owe him obedience. It is a strange irony of fate that the principle of absolutism, from which the princes derived such advantage in the century that followed, should have been first expounded in Germany in a tract designed to encourage the Emperor in resisting their pretensions.

All that was said in *De Ortu* of the authority of the Emperor applied with equal force to that of the Pope. He is the absolute monarch *par excellence*, and the author explains the Emperor’s absolutism by saying that he is as supreme in the temporal sphere as the Pope is in the spiritual. There is no room for any conception of a Council as a rival, far less as a superior authority to the Papacy. It was a complete *volte face* on the part of the author of the *Dialogues*, and when Æneas, the newly appointed Bishop of Trieste, went to Cologne in 1447, on the Emperor’s business, he was subjected to some plain criticism on his apostasy. In the course of a banquet given by the University, he was reminded by the Rector and Professors of his lucid exposition of the Conciliar theory seven years before.¹ His persuasive words had moved them to acknowledge the Council of Basel as a

¹ The *Dialogues* were written to remove the doubts of the University of Cologne with regard to the Council of Basel.

true and undoubted Council of the Church. Could it have been the prospect of a Bishopric which had caused so remarkable a change of front? Æneas's reply to the taunts of the University is the first written retraction of his earlier opinions, and it takes its place among his many exercises in the art of explaining himself.¹ Here, as elsewhere, his past errors are ascribed to youth, inexperience, and evil example. He can only thank God that, like Saul and Augustine before him, he has seen his mistake and has been led to repentance.

But the past could not be blotted out thus easily, and his advocacy of the claims of a General Council were cast in his teeth on many subsequent occasions. The *Germania*,² perhaps the most attractive of his polemical essays, was written to show the prosperity which Germany enjoyed under Papal rule and the confusion into which she had been plunged by the champions of the Conciliar movement. The Bull *Execrabilis*,³ which set its seal upon the proceedings at Mantua, may claim a place in the same cycle. Finally, an appeal to a future Council from the University of Cologne, citing the authority of Æneas Silvius, called forth the Bull *In minoribus agentes*. Thus the University which had been the cause of Æneas's first pamphlet also moved him to write his last. Some men, wrote the Pope, would rather die than confess their errors, but he will follow the example of S. Augustine, and make full confession of his past. Once more he tells the old familiar story of his coming to Basel, as a young bird let loose from the University of Siena, of the influences to which he was subjected, and of the great names which led him astray. He speaks again of the doubts which began to assail him; of his transference to the Imperial Court; of the scales which fell from his eyes when, for the first time, he heard both sides of the question; and of his conversion to an unqualified belief in the supremacy of

¹ Printed in Fea, pp. 1-17.

³ Cf. p. 178, above.

² Cf. p. 140, above.

the successors of S. Peter over the Catholic Church. "If you find anything contrary to this doctrine either in our Dialogues or in our Letters, or in our other works (for we wrote much in our youth), cast it forth in contempt. Follow what we now say: believe the old man rather than the Pope; reject Æneas, accept Pius; the Gentile name was given us by our parents at our birth, the Christian name we took on our Pontificate."¹

So the cycle was completed, and in it Æneas has left ample proof of his talents as a writer of political tracts. Eloquence, as he knew full well, was the most powerful weapon in his armoury. He had made himself a past master in the tricks of the trade, and the rules laid down in his treatise on the Art of Rhetoric² were consistently applied to his own writings. He usually began by an appreciation of the position of his opponents, or by extolling their personal merits. In answering objections, he chose out those which were easiest to refute, and made them the basis of his arguments. The points which presented greater difficulty were treated lightly, as matters of minor importance. All this he did deliberately and effectively, and the arts which he acquired by practice combined with his natural gift of persuasion to make him almost an ideal pamphleteer. Yet the value of a tract, as such, cannot be more than ephemeral, and it is not altogether easy to assign to Æneas's productions their permanent place in literature. Perhaps the most obvious conclusion to be drawn from them is that the author is only mildly interested in questions of abstract thought. He reveals himself in his essays as a man of letters, a gifted amateur in politics, and a dilettante in matters ecclesiastical, not as a political theorist or a theologian. His conception of philosophy is narrow. It is a guide to right conduct, and a subject treated of by masters of

¹ Complete in Fea, pp. 148-64; extracts in Raynaldus, 1463, No. 114.

² *Artis Rhetoricae Praecepta* (*Opera*, pp. 992-1034. Written in 1456).

style. "Respect towards women, love of home and children, reverence for old age, pity for the distressed, justice towards all; self-control in anger, restraint in indulgence, modesty in success, courage in misfortune—these are some of the virtues to which philosophy will lead you."¹ So wrote Æneas in his treatise on Education. His advice to young Ladislas for the study of the subject is to commit a few sentences from the best authors to memory daily.²

The value of Æneas's treatises lies less in his handling of the main subject than in the means which he uses for its presentment. What lives in the *Germania* is not the vindication of Papal policy, but the unrivalled description of Germany in the fifteenth century, in which the wealth of the author's knowledge and observation is laid under contribution to give an attractive and informing picture of every town that he mentions. We read the *Dialogues* to-day not for the arguments in support of the Conciliar movement, but for the sketch of daily life at Basel which they contain. The reasoning with which Caccia met and overcame Cusa's objections is forgotten, but the cheerful conversation of Æneas and his friend Martin still lives in the memory. Cusa and Caccia seat themselves on a grassy bank by the river-side in order to continue their discussion. As the sun declines they pause to say Vespers, and the other pair congratulate themselves on being able to spend their time in cultured conversation instead of wasting the precious hours in the recitation of Offices. The four companions reach the gates of Basel, and the needy Æneas joyfully accepts an invitation to supper. These are some of the delicate, sharply cut vignettes which adorn the pages of the *Dialogues*, and these are the features which give them a permanent place in literature.

Through every phase in his varied existence, Æneas

¹ *De Liberorum Educatione* (*Opera*, p. 991). Cf. above, p. 110.

² *Op. cit.*, p. 975.

had two main interests—his fellow-creatures and the world in which they lived. True child of the Renaissance, he played his part in “the rediscovery of the world and the rediscovery of man.” In his historical works his heart was in his subject, and here his literary greatness revealed itself. The universal springtime of the fifteenth century saw a new birth in the study of history. In the Middle Ages, when the noblest minds sought escape from the world, the origin and conditions of European nations evoked little interest. When, however, with the dawn of the Renaissance, the world became something to be enjoyed and understood to the uttermost, the scholar who gloried in the name of humanist seized every opportunity of adding to his historical knowledge. The historians of antiquity held the first place in his esteem, but his very admiration for them inspired him to exercise his talents upon the record of contemporary events, in the hope of performing for his own age the services which the classical writers had rendered to the past. Among the host of Renaissance historians, none was more thoroughly imbued with the spirit of his age than the humanist Pope. He, almost alone among his contemporaries, rose superior to the classical prejudices of the day, and thought it worth while to wade through uncouth masses of mediæval material, in order to learn something of the nations of Europe in their infancy. No period of the world’s history seemed to him unworthy of a humanist’s attention; therefore he applied himself to the study of the despised Middle Ages, and in so doing became the pioneer of a new development in historical writing. As an historian no less than as a statesman, he is a mirror of the Renaissance. His historical ideals are those of every humanist; his distinction lies in the personal gifts which enabled him to put those ideals into practice. Untiring energy, wide sympathies, extraordinary powers of observation, and an instinct for self-expression which made writing a necessity to him, these are some of the qualities which distinguish Æneas Silvius as a man of

letters, and which give him a right to be enrolled in the company of modern historians.

From the outset of his career Æneas looked upon his adventures and experiences as so much material for history. When lack of books put him at a disadvantage in the sphere of scholarship, he found scope for his literary instincts in describing the scenes amongst which he was living. The story of his various works upon the Council of Basel, and of how they came to be written, throws much light upon his historical methods. He had not been long at Basel before he conceived the idea of writing a History of the Council, and he at once produced an interesting account of the city and its surroundings, as an introduction to his work.¹ His wandering life as a secretary prevented him from carrying out his original intention, and his first History was not written until 1440. Yet, throughout the intervening years, he was collecting material and improving his style by means of his letters. Written when the events which they record were fresh in the author's mind, they form, as it were, the documents on which he based his more mature work. Æneas's reports to Siena on the proceedings of the Council² form an important part of the collection, as does his famous letter to Piero da Noceto, describing the breach between the moderates and the extremists in May 1437.³ The *Commentaries on the Council of Basel*, written in 1440, has the form of an historical work, but in substance it belongs to the preliminary collection of documents.⁴ Beginning with an account of the negotiations leading to Eugenius iv's deposition and the election of the anti-Pope, it concludes with a letter to John of Segovia describing the ceremonies of Felix v's coronation. Thus the events of which it treats are practically confined to the year 1439, and the author's point of view is frankly that of Felix v's secretary and

¹ Cf. above, pp. 33-5.

² Cf. above, p. 53.

³ Cf. above, p. 59.

⁴ *Commentariorum de Gestis Basiliensis Concilii (Opera, pp. 1-63)*. Cf. above, p. 69.

champion. He is full of admiration for the energetic leader of the anti-Papal party, Louis, Cardinal of Arles, and he speaks confidently of the happy era which has dawned for the Church under the auspices of her new shepherd, Felix v. Eugenius iv, on the other hand, is alluded to as plain Gabriel Condulmier, "a reed shaken by the wind," and an object of dislike and contempt. Yet Æneas's historical instincts were too strong for him to write a mere political tract. He could not refrain from describing the quarrels and idiosyncrasies of the stalwarts at Basel in a way that was hardly calculated to enhance the Council's prestige in the eyes of Europe. With an eye for picturesque details and striking situations, he paints a truer picture than he intended, and reveals aspects of the Council altogether beyond the ken of its conscientious chronicler John of Segovia.

Some ten years later, between 1448 and 1451, Æneas gave his final verdict upon the Conciliar movement in *De Rebus Basiliæ Gestis Commentarius*.¹ Here the author's object is to give a brief survey of the history of the Council of Basel, in order that posterity may know "how in our days the schism was born and nourished, grew and expired." Beginning with the publication of the Constance decrees providing for the recurrence of General Councils, he traces the course of events at Basel from the opening of the Council until its dissolution in 1449. *De Rebus Basiliæ Gestis* thus forms a brilliant historical essay in which the graphic descriptions, ironic comments, and shrewd summaries of character are a heritage from the author's earlier writings, while the well-preserved proportions, sane judgments, and clear, terse style bear witness to his ripened powers. Æneas's opinions had undergone considerable modification since 1440, and he now wrote of the Conciliar movement as revolutionary and inimical to the Church. Felix v, whose coronation he had hailed with pæans of thanksgiving, is dismissed as "more useful to the Church by his death than

¹ Printed in Fea, *Pius II a calumniis vindicatus*, pp. 31-115.

by his life." His History is undeniably biased, yet it never forfeits the name of history by descending to mere perversion of fact. The sum total of Æneas's writings on the Council render him the principal authority on the subject to-day. Few who have not turned his sparkling pages realise how largely the material, and indeed the very phrases of later historians are due to the active pen of this *condottiere* of letters.

The most productive years of Æneas's life, from a literary point of view, were those in which he was living in Rome as a Cardinal. As compared with his multifarious activities at the Imperial Court and with the cares of his Pontificate, it was a time of leisure, while the libraries of Rome gave him access to books which he had coveted from his student-days. The *History of Frederick III*¹ and the *History of Bohemia*² bear witness to the use which he made of two years' respite from more arduous labours. Here again, the works which he brought to completion in Rome embody miscellaneous writings covering the whole period of his sojourn in Germany. The description of Vienna with which his *Frederick III* opens was written in 1438, and the impression of size and prosperity which he gained from his first visit to the city still lingers in its phrases. "The amount of provisions which are brought into the city every day seems almost incredible. There are many wagon-loads of eggs and crabs, while white bread, meat, fish, and game are brought in great quantities. When evening falls you will find nothing left for sale."³ One can almost see the keen-eyed Italian standing in the market and watching the immense stores of provisions gradually diminishing as the day wore on. The account of Frederick III's journey to Italy for his coronation and marriage is practically Æneas's diary of an expedition in which he played the part

¹ *Historia Friderici III* (printed in Kollar, *An. Mon. Vindobon.*, ii. pp. 1-476).

² *Historia Bohemica* (printed in *Opera*, pp. 81-143).

³ Æneas Silvius to a friend in Basel, April 1438 (*Wolkan*, Ep. 27; *Opera*, Ep. 165).

of organiser-in-chief. For the Diet of Regensburg, and the fruitless efforts to stir up Europe to avenge the fall of Constantinople, he had his own History, written three months after the close of the Congress.¹ For other episodes he found useful material in his *De Viris Claris*,² a collection of some fifty biographical sketches written between 1444 and 1450, in which the exploits of famous contemporaries, soldiers and statesmen, ecclesiastics and scholars, are recorded almost at haphazard, as if they had been jotted down in the historian's notebook for use on some future occasion. Besides his own writings, he could rely upon the letters of his numerous friends in Germany, and from them he obtained first-hand accounts of events which he did not himself witness, such as the heroic relief of Belgrad and the death of King Ladislas.

The circumstances of his earlier life had given Æneas peculiar interest in Bohemia and considerable personal knowledge of its inhabitants. He saw the Hussite leaders ride into Basel for the Conference in 1433. In 1451 he was sent by Frederick III to attend the Bohemian Diet at Beneschau. Both going and returning he passed through Tabor, the stronghold of the extreme Hussites, and he afterwards wrote a letter to Carvajal describing all that he had heard and seen there. While he tarried in Rome in 1455, hoping to receive a Cardinal's hat, he pleaded with Calixtus III for the recognition of the Compacts in an oration which gave an attractive and illuminating account of the conditions prevailing in Bohemia. With this oration still fresh in his mind he embarked upon his History. The author's attitude towards the religion of the Bohemians is throughout that of the orthodox Catholic. The Hussites are, in his eyes, "men who deny obedience to the Roman Church and forsake the religion of their ancestors, slayers of priests, spoilers of the Church, without faith or good

¹ *Historia de Ratisponensi Dieta* (printed in Mansi, *Orationes*, vol. iii. pp. 1-85).

² *De Viris aetate sua Claris* (Mansi, iii. pp. 144-214).

works." At Tabor he was filled with holy horror at finding himself in a city where "there are as many heresies as there are heads, and where every one is at liberty to believe what he will."¹ A creed of which the adherents despised the sacraments, refused to consecrate their churches, buried their dead in the fields like beasts, and only cared about hearing sermons, seemed to him a mere travesty of religion. The Taborites boasted that they followed the practices of primitive Christian society, and had all things in common. But "the first disciples distributed of their own goods to the brethren, and took nothing from strangers save what was freely given for the love of Christ. These men plunder the goods of others, and live in common upon the spoils of violence."² In the face of the prosperity and the victories of these impious heretics, Æneas feels obliged to evolve a theory by which to reconcile their present fortune with Divine justice. "As no one is so wicked as to be without one spark of good," he writes, "God rewards the good in these persons with the blessings of this frail and fleeting life. Eternal light He cannot grant them, by reason of the greatness of their sins."³ Nevertheless, Æneas is fascinated by the Bohemians even while he disapproves. When he describes the fierce bravery of the Hussite warriors, or the holy fortitude with which Hus and Jerome of Prag met their death at the stake, he writes with sympathy and enthusiasm. In the days of the Catholic Reaction this separation of heretics from their heresy was a crime for which unimpeachable orthodoxy could not atone, and Pope Pius II's *Historia Bohemica* eventually found its way on to the Index.

Neither the *History of Bohemia* nor the *History of Frederick III* are limited to the events of the author's own day. His main authorities for the early history of Bohemia are the chronicles of Pulkawa and Dalimil, and the ancient

¹ Æneas Silvius to Cardinal Carvajal, 21 August 1451 (*Opera*, Ep. 130, p. 661).

² *Loc. cit.*, p. 662.

³ *Historia Bohemica* (*Opera*), p. 81.

sagas, telling of Cech, Krok, and other legendary heroes of the Tchech nation. Æneas's critical spirit prevented him from giving credence to their least plausible statements, but he lacked the material with which to correct their errors. For the introductory chapters of his *Frederick III* he was forced to make use of "a certain history which they call Austrian, written in the German tongue, which is both stupid and lying, the work of one of whom it is hard to judge whether he is more knave or fool." ¹ He proceeds to expose the follies and inaccuracies of this "two-legged ass" with rather wearisome fulness, until the works of Otto of Freisingen provide him with worthier material. For Otto, the uncle of Barbarossa, who ranks with our hero in the goodly company of historians who are also ecclesiastics, Æneas has the warmest admiration. "It is praiseworthy in Otto," he writes, "that although he records the deeds of his brother and nephew, who were enemies of the Roman Pontiffs, he so obeys the law of history that truth does not suffer from his kinship, nor his kinship from truth." ²

Pius II's accession to the Papacy might well be expected to have put an end to his literary work. But the habits of a lifetime are hard to set aside, and during the years of his Pontificate he dedicated to history hours that should have been spent in rest and sleep. The last book of the *Commentaries* carries the events of his reign down to the spring of 1464, the eve of his departure for Ancona. His motive for writing a history of his Pontificate is characteristic both of himself and of his age. A true humanist in his thirst for glory, he longed for his name to live after him, and he considered it the plain duty of every ruler to take thought for his future reputation. In the case of a Pope this was all the more necessary, as the very prominence of his position placed him more at the mercy of envious tongues. But "envy will cease with death," and with the disappearance of personal passions which pervert justice, true fame will have its opportunity, "Pius will

¹ *Historia Friderici III*, p. 15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 29.

be praised among illustrious Popes.”¹ Hence the man who all through his life had taken pleasure in explaining himself determined to provide posterity with the material upon which a true judgment of his character could be based. Thus Pius is himself the hero of his last and greatest work. This fact alone gives higher artistic value to the *Commentaries* than is possessed by his earlier writings. In them proportion is apt to suffer from the inveterate egoism which makes Æneas Silvius loom larger than the central figures of the canvas. In the *Commentaries* the author’s egoism can have full play, and the more his personality predominates the greater the unity of the whole.

The first book of the *Commentaries* treats of the origins of the author’s family, and gives a brief sketch of his career up to 1458; the remaining twelve books are devoted to the events of his Pontificate.² Yet we have here far more than a history of Pius II’s brief reign. At every turn episodes are introduced relating to the history of those States and individuals with which the author came into contact. Pius stays at Florence on his way to Mantua, and so pauses in his narrative to explain the peculiar position of the Medici, and to enumerate the great men of all ages who have made Florence famous. The arrival of Francesco Sforza at Mantua provides the occasion for a digression on the Duchy of Milan in which the author relates how “the once powerful kingdom of the Lombards, with its rich territories, passed to the Sforza, whose ancestors within the memory of our fathers hardly possessed as much land as they could till.”³ In the same way, the account of Pius II’s negotiations with Louis XI over the Pragmatic Sanction is prefaced by a sketch of French history which

¹ *Commentariorum Pii II Pont. Max., Praefatio.*

² The references made here to the first twelve books are to the Frankfurt edition of 1614; the thirteenth book is given by Voigt, vol. ii. pp. 359–77. For the various MSS. of the *Commentaries* and the form in which they were published, cf. Chapter XV., pp. 343–5.

³ *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 72.

traces the origin of the Hundred Years War, and gives graphic descriptions of the battle of Agincourt, the murder of John of Burgundy, and the career of Jeanne d'Arc.¹ Thus the *Commentaries* embody the experience and observation of a lifetime. There is hardly a great man of the day who does not figure in their pages; every phase of European politics is touched upon, and every important town in Italy is described. And all is told in a style full of charm and individuality, in which the freshness of a mediæval chronicler mingles with the critical spirit of a Renaissance scholar. It is surprising indeed that so remarkable a book should be so comparatively little known.

It is impossible to dwell upon the numerous historical essays scattered up and down our hero's works. In the Basel *Dialogues* Æneas takes advantage of a chance reference to the excommunication of King Lothair by Pope Nicholas I to ask his friend Martin for an account of the origins of French history. The sketch which follows is an example of his insatiable thirst for historical information. The same spirit inspires a history of the Goths which he compiled from a manuscript by one Jordanis, discovered in a German monastery, and the abridged edition of the *Decades* of Flavius Blondus which he made during his Pontificate.² The most enterprising of his undertakings was his plan for a *Cosmographia*, or universal history and geography. One day when Cardinal Piccolomini happened to be detained in Rome by a bad attack of gout, a bookseller came to him with the request that he would revise and finish a certain sketch of the history of the Empire which he had in his possession.³ Thereupon Æneas began to collect material for a topographical history of the nations of Europe as he knew them. After he became Pope, a discussion between himself and Federico, Duke of Urbino, as to the borders of Asia

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. vi. pp. 148-65.

² Cf. p. 248, above.

³ This was the *Liber Augustalis* of Benvenuto da Imola. Cf. Æneas's dedicatory letter, 29 March 1458, in Freher, *Ger. Rev. Script.*, ii.

Minor took place in the course of a morning ride to Tivoli, and this led him to extend the scope of his work to include Asia.¹ Both *Europa* and *Asia*, as they have come down to posterity, are little more than preliminary collections of material, incomplete, unequal, and devoid of style.² Nevertheless, this unfinished *Cosmographia* reveals Æneas as one extraordinarily well versed in the literature of his subject, and able to combine book-learning with observation. The strength of the work lies in its insistence upon the close connection between geography and history, a characteristic which distinguishes all Æneas's historical writings. His *Europa* formed the basis of the sixteenth-century cosmographies of Sebastian Franck and Sebastian Münster.³ His *Asia* fired the imagination of a generation of explorers, and sent them forth to discover for themselves the lands which he had pictured.

From a review of Pius II's historical writings, bewildering in their multiplicity, it is interesting to turn to the theory which inspired his activity. In common with other humanists he urged the study of history on grounds that were entirely practical. "History is our guide to the days that are now, because it exhibits those that are past," he wrote in his treatise on Education,⁴ and he is never tired of insisting upon the value of history in the training of a statesman. Wisdom, he says, springs from experience, and "the counsels of the aged are valued owing to the manifold experience which has made them wise." Yet one man's life is so short that human experience is limited to some seventy or eighty years, but the study of history may extend that experience "throughout the centuries that the world has been." In this sense it may be said that "history alone can give to the young the wisdom that is not theirs by nature."⁵

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. v. p. 136.

² They are printed in *Opera*, pp. 281-471.

³ Cf. Berg, *Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini in seiner Bedeutung als Geograph*, p. 33.

⁴ *Opera*, p. 985.

⁵ *Historia Friderici III*, pp. 1-2.

With this lofty conception before him, it was natural that Æneas should approach his subject in the spirit of a scientific historian. The discovery of truth is his primary object; "not to deviate from the paths of truth," is the fundamental law which he dares not break. Nowhere does he show himself more thoroughly modern than in his attempt to lay down rules for estimating the value of evidence. "All that is written must not necessarily be believed," he tells us, "and only the canonical Scriptures have undoubted authority. In other cases one must discover who the author is, what life he led, to what sect he belonged, and what is his personal worth. It is also necessary to consider with what other accounts he agrees, and from which he differs, and whether what he says is probable, and in accordance with the time and place of which he treats."¹ In the light of these maxims he refuses to believe that the Bohemians once went about naked and lived on acorns, holding that the climate would make such customs impossible. He dismisses the theory that the original Bohemians were among the builders of the tower of Babel with the contemptuous remark that, if the Bohemians were so anxious to prove their ancient lineage, they might as well trace their ancestry to Noah's Ark, and to our first parents in Eden.² In answer to the suggestion that the name Vienna originally came from *bienna*, the city having twice resisted the arms of Julius Cæsar, he points out that no record of Cæsar having fought in Austria is to be found in the classical authorities.³ The same spirit shows itself in his treatment of the problems of his own day. He will lay the facts before his readers, suggest alternative explanations, and leave the ultimate verdict to posterity in a way that is

¹ *Dialogus* (Rome, 1475). This curious little work was written in 1453, and dedicated by Æneas to Cardinal Carvajal. The author's journey through the realms of the dead with S. Bernardino as his guide forms a loose bond for a collection of essays on diverse subjects.

² *Historia Bohemica*, cap. 2-3 (*Opera*, p. 84).

³ *Historia Friderici III*, p. 8.

quite startlingly modern. Creighton has instanced his judgment on the career of Jeanne d'Arc. Another example may be found in his description of a miracle of S. Bernardino which he witnessed when the Saint was preaching in the Piazza del Campo at Siena. "One Sunday, when a great crowd had collected to hear Bernardino, suddenly the face of the sky was changed, storm succeeded calm, and torrents of rain seemed imminent. His hearers had turned to fly, but the preacher bade them remain and be of good cheer. Baring his head, he offered prayers to God; thereupon the clouds dispersed and the sky grew clear again, so that the people could listen in peace. This occurrence may certainly have been accidental, nevertheless all ascribed it to the prayers of the holy man."¹ Æneas had been profoundly moved by S. Bernardino's life and teaching, and he considered that he had "without doubt cured the sick and performed other miracles." Yet his critical spirit triumphed over the temptation to declare himself an eye-witness of the Saint's supernatural powers, without showing himself aware that what he saw admitted of a natural interpretation.

Æneas strove, and strove successfully, to make himself a scientific historian, but he was a born artist. He possessed to the full the artist's sensitiveness to impression, and whether the impression came to him from a scene which he witnessed, a person with whom he came into contact, or a manuscript which fell into his hands, he could not fail to reproduce it as a picture. The true lyric note sounds in his description of that stupendous monument of a vanished civilisation—Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli. "Walls once hung with rich tapestries and cloth of gold are now clothed with ivy; thorns and brambles usurp the seats of purple-robed tribunes; the sumptuous dwelling-places of queens have become the abode of serpents."² It rings out again when Pius tells how he

¹ *Historia Friderici III*, p. 175.

² *Commentarii*, lib. v. p. 138.

sat with his Cardinals on the summit of Monte Cavo, measuring with his eye the entire coast-line of the Papal States from Terracina to Monte Argentario, marking the serpent-like course of the Tiber, looking down on the lakes of Nemi and Albano at his feet, framed in leafy woods and verdant pastures, and letting his eye travel over the broom-decked spaces of the Campagna until it rested at last upon Rome, offering herself in all her glory to his gaze.¹

Other pictures which he gives us are illumined by flashes of half-kindly, half-malicious humour. He describes the festivities attending the reception of S. Andrew's head in Rome, and relates how he insisted that all the Cardinals taking part in the final procession to S. Peter's should go on foot. It was a great sight, he assures us, to see old men nurtured in luxury, who would not as a rule go a hundred yards on horseback, "accomplishing that day two miles on foot, through the mud and wet, carrying the weight of their priestly attire." Corpulence in many cases added to the load, but "love bore the burden," and the heated ecclesiastics struggled valiantly to their goal.² During one of his pilgrimages in Tuscany, Pius II visited the great Sienese sanctuary of Monte Oliveto and was profoundly impressed by the splendid buildings, the gardens and orchards, the cool groves and sparkling fountains which adorned this monastic paradise. The memory of his visit lives to-day owing to the characteristic remark with which he concludes his description. "Great are the pleasures of the monks who dwell there," says the inveterate worldling, "greater still are the pleasures of those who having seen all can go away."³

It is the same human touch, employed in a very different connection, which distinguishes Pius II's account of the death-bed of the great Hungarian leader, Hunyadi.

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. xi. p. 301.

² *Ibid.*, lib. viii. p. 198.

³ *Ibid.*, lib. x. p. 263.

After telling of his exploits against the Turks, culminating in the brilliant relief of Belgrad, Pius writes: "When he knew that his last hour had come, he would not suffer the Body of the Lord to be brought to him, saying that it was not meet for a King to enter the house of a servant. Rising from his bed, he commanded that he should be carried into the Church, and there he made confession after the manner of Christians; then, amid the ministrations of the priests, he gave back his soul to God."¹ In this tender story Pius has left a finished sketch of Hunyadi's simple, heroic character. The scientific historian may aim at writing true history, but it needs an artist to present truth in a form which the human mind can realise and remember.

Pius II's great biographer Voigt, who always regarded his hero as something of a charlatan, accuses him of sacrificing truth to artistic effect, and of thus vitiating his work as an historian. Pius certainly realised that the permanent impression of the events which he recorded depended largely upon the way in which they were brought before his readers. "Great is eloquence," he once said, "and if truth be told, nothing so much rules the world."² A busy life often prevented him from giving the necessary finish to his writings, and his by no means faultless Latinity condemned him in the eyes of his contemporaries. Nevertheless, he paid deliberate attention to style, making it his aim to write "as a clever man speaks when he lets himself go, and does not wish to show off either his taste or his learning."³ He disliked copying documents verbatim, fearing that their uncouth form would spoil the artistic unity of his work, and preferring to summarise their contents in his own words. A comparison between the *Commentaries* and the collected editions of Pius II's Bulls

¹ *Historia Friderici III*, p. 465, and *Europa*, cap. i.

² Eneas Silvius to Adam Moleyns, 29 May 1444 (*Wolkan*, Ep. 143; *Opera*, Ep. 65).

³ Cf. Voigt, vol. ii. p. 257, and the interesting letter on style to Zbigniew, Bishop of Cracow, 27 Oct. 1453 (*Opera*, Ep. 402).



WELL-HEAD
PALAZZO PICCOLOMINI, PIENZA

and orations shows a tendency to improve even his own compositions when transcribing them in his narrative. In the same way, he followed the approved classical tradition of putting speeches of his own making into the mouths of historical personages, as a means of summing up the issues and sentiments of the moment. Yet all these characteristics are questions of method rather than of principle, and they detract nothing from the truthfulness of the general impression which he conveys. If Pius failed at times to keep "the law of history," it is the politician and not the artist who must bear the blame. The politician was impelled to write, at subsequent stages of his career, as the champion or the critic of the Conciliar movement, as the obsequious servant of Frederick III, or as the panegyrist of Pope Pius II. The artist, meanwhile, fought on the side of historical veracity, and painted a truthful picture almost against the will of the author. The sincerity of Æneas Silvius, in the sphere of letters as in practical life, will always remain more or less of a problem, and varied as are the solutions offered, certain obvious flaws in his character prevent the question from being answered entirely in his favour. Nevertheless, his strength lies in the possession of qualities of mind and heart peculiarly fitted for dealing with men, both in the world around him and in his literary work. Sympathy and observation enabled him to read the characters of those who controlled the destinies of Europe and to sway their policy. Sympathy and observation enabled him to appreciate the men and movements of all ages, and to make them live again in the pages of his history.

CHAPTER XIV

PIUS II AND THE CRUSADE

IN the history of Pius II's dealings with Italy and Europe the affairs of the East play a subordinate part. At times it seemed as if they were in danger of being thrust aside owing to the pressure of events nearer home. Nevertheless, they never for one moment lost their prominence in the Pope's mind. To him the Italian wars and the diplomatic struggle in France and the Empire were, from first to last, a means towards an end; the ultimate object underlying every phase of the Papal policy was the marshalling of a united Christendom against the infidel. To the Princes of Europe, however, the means were vastly more important than the end. The crusading cause demanded a prompt settlement of the political problems of the day in order that Europe might be free to wage war on the Turk. But the Princes, where their personal interests were involved, cared little about the promptitude of the settlement, and a great deal about its terms. Therefore Europe wasted itself in petty warfare and interminable negotiations, while the Turks pursued their victorious course with a steadiness that knew no obstacle.

Before the opening of the Congress of Mantua the news reached Rome that Servia had become a Turkish province, and in the summer of 1459, Semendria, the last Servian stronghold on the Danube, was treacherously sold to the Turk by its guardian, Stephan, son of the King of Bosnia. "This event," says Pius, "was as great a blow to the hearts

of the Hungarians as the loss of Constantinople.”¹ Meanwhile a similar fate was overhanging Bosnia. This unhappy country was hampered in its struggle for existence by dynastic quarrels and religious dissension. It was looked upon with suspicion by the Western Church as a stronghold of the ancient Manichean heresy,² and it had long wavered between allegiance to the King of Hungary and acceptance of the Turkish yoke. The efforts of Carvajal at last prompted Bosnia to recognise the suzerainty of Hungary, and when young Stephan succeeded to his father's throne in 1461, he belied the evil reputation which he had earned at Semendria by definitely taking his stand upon the side of Catholic Europe. In November 1462 he sent an embassy to Rome, seeking Papal recognition as a Christian monarch, and begging for aid against the Turk. He showed, convincingly enough, that Bosnia would be but the stepping-stone to further inroads. The storm would break upon his unhappy kingdom, but Hungary and the Venetian dominions would soon experience its terrors, and Italy itself would not long remain undisturbed.³ Pius at once promised all the help in his power, and sent a legate to plead Stephan's cause with Hungary and Venice. But while Europe negotiated the Turk acted. In May 1463, before any of the Pope's schemes could bear fruit, the Sultan descended upon Bosnia. The secret support of the Manichees gave him an easy entry into the country, and in a few brief weeks Stephan was taken and beheaded, while his wife and mother fled with some faithful followers to Rome. Thus one more province was lost to Christendom through the dilatoriness and apathy of the Christian powers. Well might Pius reply to the repeated appeals of Carvajal: “We know how you should be equipped for a successful continuation of your work. We know what is necessary for the health of Christendom. But, beloved son,

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. iii. p. 64.

² Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

³ *Ibid.*, lib. xi. p. 298.

we can do no more ; our powers lag far behind our desires." ¹

The same years saw the overthrow of the last remnant of the Palæologian Empire. After the fall of Constantinople, the Emperor's two brothers, Demetrius and Thomas, were permitted to continue as despots of the Morea, on condition of paying tribute to the Sultan. The brothers maintained separate courts, Thomas residing at Patras and Demetrius at Mistra, and, in the opinion of a contemporary, their mutual hatred was such that " each would gladly have devoured the other's heart." ² Thomas was so far superior to his brother that he was not content to acquiesce tamely in whatever treatment the Sultan might choose to mete out to him. When his overlord calmly took possession of a large slice of his territory, he appealed for help to the Congress of Mantua. Three hundred Italians were sent to his aid, a hundred of whom were paid and equipped by the Duchess of Milan. These troops took part in Thomas's vain attempt to storm Patras in the autumn of 1459, but they were powerless to resist the Sultan's vengeance. Not many months later the Morea passed directly beneath the Turkish yoke. Thomas fled to Rome, and Demetrius retired with a pension to Adrianople, while his daughter entered Mahomet II's harem.

In September 1461 the Venetians brought news of the fall of Sinope and, with it, the little Empire of Trebizond upon the shores of the Black Sea. Only in Albania the bold adventurer Scanderbeg still maintained his independence, and even he, despairing of help from Europe, was forced to sign a disadvantageous truce with the Sultan. In 1462 Mahomet II launched a fleet in the Ægean which was destined to overthrow the rule of the Knights of S. John at Rhodes. The Knights succeeded in holding their own, but the Genoese Government was expelled from Lesbos with ruthless violence, while some Venetian ships

¹ Pius II to Carvajal, 11 June 1459. Cf. Voigt, vol. iii. p. 54.

² Cf. Voigt, vol. iii. p. 55.

stood near at hand not daring to succour their compatriots for fear of embroiling their own Republic with the all-powerful Turk. To Pius II, the fall of historic Lesbos, the home of Sappho and of Alcæus, seemed a bitter tragedy. His sorrow found expression in the sketch of its history which he gives in the *Commentaries*. Here the humanist Pope paints the vanished glories of Lesbos "in order that we may better understand our loss, and may perhaps be ashamed of our slothfulness, and may go forth with more willing hearts against the enemies of our Faith."¹

Meanwhile the tale of disaster in the East was repeatedly brought home to Italy by the arrival of victims of the Turkish onslaught, seeking refuge and imploring aid. As with beggars of a humbler kind, it was difficult to distinguish genuine cases from impostors. Many a needy adventurer discovered that a picturesque costume, a sensational story, and a high-sounding Oriental title could be turned to considerable profit in Western Europe. Among the earliest of these somewhat shady suppliants was one Moses Giblet, Archdeacon of Antioch, who visited the Pope at Siena in April 1460, bearing letters from the Patriarchs of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria, in which they professed their obedience to the Western Church and besought Papal protection. Giblet came of a distinguished Syrian family, and Pius II found him "well versed in Greek and Syrian literature."² Yet the bare record of the incident in the *Commentaries* seems to indicate that the Pope regarded it with more suspicion than satisfaction, and it was entirely without practical result. In December of the same year an embassy on a far more magnificent scale appeared in Rome. The company, we learn, included envoys from "David, Emperor of Trebizond; George, King of Persia; the King of Mesopotamia; Gorgora, Duke of Greater Iberia; and Urtebecus, Lord of Armenia Minor. . . . These legates were so strange in manners and dress that they were a cause of astonishment to all. Wherever they went they

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. x. p. 244.

² *Ibid.*, lib. iv. p. 103.

drew the gaze of the people, and a crowd of boys followed them in the streets.”¹ Some of the party were tonsured like monks, and the Mesopotamian envoy’s head was clean shaven except for a waving tuft of hair on his crown. They possessed voracious appetites, and were said to consume twenty pounds of meat apiece every day. “If our contest were over a banquet,” said the Pope to Campano, “we should be certain of victory with these men as our allies.”² These strange visitors were marshalled by a Franciscan, Lodovico of Bologna, who had been sent on a mission to the East some years before. The embassy was to all appearance genuine. It had visited Frederick III on the way through Germany, and had been received with every mark of honour by the Venetian Republic. Its proposals, moreover, were as splendid as its equipment. The envoys offered, in the name of their respective masters, to bring an army of 120,000 men into the field with which to attack the Turk from Asia, on condition that the powers of Europe attacked with an equal force from the West. Pius could not fall short of Venice in his hospitality. He entertained the envoys in Rome, and advised them to visit the Courts of Burgundy and France, in order to expound their proposals and solicit aid. He even went so far as to pay the expenses of their journey; but he turned a deaf ear to Lodovico’s request that he should be made Patriarch of the Eastern Christians professing the Roman obedience. The envoys arrived in France in time to see the funeral of Charles VII and the coronation of Louis XI, and they were duly impressed by the sumptuous brilliancy which distinguished the Burgundian Court. “Behold, we come like wise men from the East to the star which we have seen in the West,” said the spokesman of the party to Duke Philip.³ Nevertheless, in neither place did they evoke enthusiasm for their cause or obtain any material aid, and in the meantime doubts as to their character began to arise

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. v. p. 127.

² Campano, *Vita Pii II.*

³ Pii II, *Epistolæ (Opera)*, Ep. 380, p. 855).

in Rome. Contrary to the Pope's express orders, Lodovico had freely styled himself Patriarch during his mission, and had used the title to extort money from the faithful. Could it be that he was a liar and a deceiver, that his companions were masqueraders and their letters forgeries? Pius II could not bring himself to believe that the embassy was imposturous, and although its members received a lukewarm welcome on their return to Rome, they were allowed to depart for Venice without open scandal. Soon afterwards the Pope's eyes were opened to the true nature of the embassy by the news that Lodovico had obtained consecration as Patriarch from some unsuspecting Bishops. Pius immediately gave orders for Lodovico's arrest; but before they could be put into effect, the charlatan had disappeared, and nothing more was heard of him or of his companions. From that time forward the Pope preserved a deep-rooted suspicion of "Orientals and those coming from beyond the seas, especially when they are needy and of obscure fame." ¹

The year 1461 brought two more suppliants to the feet of the Holy Father. Neither their identity nor their good faith could be called in question, yet they were as necessitous as their forerunners, and they made even larger demands upon the Papal bounty. On 15 October 1461 a beautiful and distressed lady arrived at the Vatican and besought Pius II for aid. This was Charlotte of Lusignan, Queen of Cyprus, whose kingdom had been usurped by her illegitimate brother James, acting in concert with the Turk. Queen Charlotte was married to Louis, son of the Duke of Savoy, and he, at this moment, was closely besieged in the fortress of Cerina by the forces of the usurper. The plucky girl had been stirred to action by Louis's misfortune, and had

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. viii. p. 192. It was the reception accorded to the envoys in Venice that first led the Pope to trust them, "quae res fecit ut veri oratores crederentur, propter commercium quod Veneti cum Orientalibus habent." A warning from the Doge enabled Lodovico to escape arrest at the last. Could it be that the Venetian Republic was a party to the fraud?

come alone to Western Europe in order to seek aid for herself and her husband. Pius considered that the responsibility of providing for her lay with Savoy, and he even sent Cardinal Estouteville to Ostia to dissuade Charlotte from coming to Rome.¹ But when she persisted, and actually made her appearance at the Vatican, her bright eyes and winning speech proved too much for the Pope's obduracy. He treated her with marked kindness, and promised to pay the expenses of her journey to Savoy. After visiting the sights of Rome, Charlotte departed on her quest with an escort of fifty horse, and with letters of recommendation to the various cities through which she would pass. Unfortunately for her cause, the Duke of Savoy was less soft-hearted than the Pope. He complained loudly that Cyprus would exhaust Savoy with its perpetual demands for men and money, and he even went so far as to say that no honest young woman would leave her husband to make voyages to the West.² Sad at heart, Charlotte abandoned further effort, and returned by way of Mantua and Venice to Rhodes. She never regained her lost kingdom, and in a few years' time she too came to swell the band of refugees from the East in Rome.

One day in Lent 1461 the fugitive Thomas Palæologus arrived in Rome with his wife and four children. Common opinion pronounced him to be a fine man, grave yet pleasing in expression, with good manners and princely bearing. He brought with him seventy horses, of which all but three were borrowed, and he seemed entirely without resources.³ Pius was full of sympathy for the exile, and gave him lodgings at Santo Spirito, with a pension of three hundred ducats a month, to which the Cardinals added two hundred ducats.⁴ After a few vain attempts to find allies who would help

¹ Cf. Pastor, vol. iii. p. 253, quoting from the dispatches of the Mantuan ambassador in Rome.

² *Commentarii*, lib. vii. p. 180.

³ Cf. Bartolomeo Bonatto to Barbara of Mantua, 9 March 1461 (Pastor, vol. iii. Appendix 43, from the *Gonzaga Archives*).

⁴ *Commentarii*, lib. v. p. 130.

him to recover his throne, the ex-despot resigned himself to his fate, and spent the remainder of his days in Rome. The only return which he could make to the Pope for his hospitality was to present him with the jewels, embroidery, and other treasures which he had brought from the East. Chief among these was the sacred relic of S. Andrew's head, the reception of which in Rome gave occasion for the most splendid festival of Pius II's Pontificate. It is impossible to read Pius's own account of the great event without realising that he felt it to be the supreme moment of his life. To say that he and his contemporaries regarded it as a mere excuse for gorgeous ceremonial is to be blind to the strength of the mediæval spirit. Here at the very shrine of the Renaissance, at a time when the modern world was revelling in its new-born strength, the whole city—scholars and artists, soldiers and courtiers, Pope and populace—abandoned itself in a passion of emotion to the reception of this precious relic. The genius of the Renaissance spent itself in giving splendour to the occasion, but the spirit which inspired the festivities was bred of the love and worship of the Middle Ages.

The head of S. Andrew had hitherto been preserved at Patras, from whence it had been taken by Thomas Palæologus to save it from the infidel. "The Pope," we read, "was much grieved at the exile of the sacred head. But as it could not easily be restored to its resting-place, he knew no worthier refuge for it than Rome, by the bones of its brother S. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and under the protection of the Holy See, the Ark of the Faith." ¹ Cardinal Oliva went to meet the relic at Ancona and to place it in safe custody at Narni, until such time as it could be received in Rome with due honour. Not until the spring of 1462 did a favourable opportunity arise. Then, on Palm Sunday, the head was brought by three Cardinals from Narni to the Ponte Molle, outside the walls

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. viii. pp. 192-202, for the whole ceremony of the reception of S. Andrew's head,

of Rome. A great stage was erected in the adjoining meadows, and here the Pope came in state to welcome the relic. This was on Monday in Holy Week, and those who walked in the Papal procession bore the palm branches which they had received the day before at the Palm-Sunday Mass. It was a radiant April morning, and the white-robed procession shone out with dazzling brightness on the green grass. As the Pope mounted the stage, Cardinal Bessarion advanced from the other side, and taking the sacred head from its casket, "gave it, weeping, to the weeping Pope." Pale with emotion, Pius threw himself on his knees and, with bowed head and trembling voice, addressed a prayer to the new-comer: "Thou art come at last, most sacred and adored head of the Holy Apostle, driven from thy dwelling by the fury of the Turk. An exile, thou fliest to thy brother, the Prince of the Apostles. Thy brother will not fail thee, but will restore thee to thy home with glory. If God will, it shall be said one day, 'O happy exile, to have obtained such aid.' Meanwhile, thou shalt tarry for a while with thy brother and share his honour." Naively literal as the words sound, they fell on sympathetic ears, and when the Pope had finished speaking there was not a dry eye among the whole company. One after the other the weeping clergy advanced to kiss the relic, and then, at the Pope's command, all broke forth in a glad *Te Deum* until the meadows re-echoed to the sound.

The head was placed for the night upon the altar of S. Maria del Popolo, and the next day it was carried in procession to its final resting-place at S. Peter's. True April weather prevailed, and all through the night the rain fell in torrents. It was feared that the ceremonies of the morrow would be interrupted, and Pius was distressed at the thought of the disappointment of the crowds who had come to Rome for the occasion. Great was his delight when the storm ceased at dawn, and the sun rose with new splendour. The change, he said, was due to

the prayers of S. Andrew, and even as he said it, the following distich "rushed into his mind":—

"Nocte pluit tota redeunt spectacula mane.
Divisum imperium cum Jove Cæsar habet."¹

In the days of the Renaissance, there was nothing incongruous in this juxtaposition of S. Andrew and Jupiter. Heathen gods and Christian saints held "divided Empire" over the humanist Pope.

The streets between S. Maria del Popolo and the Vatican were decorated with an ingenuity and a magnificence that were only surpassed in the decorations at Viterbo a few weeks later. On this occasion, also, the work of Cardinal Rodrigo Borgia outshone all others. His palace reminded the Pope of the Emperor Nero's famous golden house, and he had even decorated the palaces of his neighbours, so that the entire Piazza seemed a paradise of sight and sound. When at last the Pope made his appearance in the Piazza of S. Peter's, borne in a golden litter beneath a sumptuous *baldacchino*, and carrying in his hands the sacred head, "a great cry arose like the roar of many waters." At the top of the marble steps he turned to bless the multitude and to exhibit the relic, before placing it with the bones of S. Peter and S. Paul in the centre of the basilica. Inside S. Peter's, Bessarion made an oration which gained scant attention from his wearied hearers. Then, after a brief reply from the Pope and a few prayers, the company dispersed—the ceremonies of the great day were over. Pius subsequently built the beautiful chapel of S. Andrew to contain the relic, and here, at his desire, his own body was placed. In the building of the new S. Peter's the chapel of S. Andrew was demolished, but the great statue of the saint at the south-west corner of the dome still guards the place where the exile from Patras found its last home.

¹ "It rains at night; in the morning all the pageants return. Cæsar holds divided Empire with Jupiter."

Meanwhile the years slipped by, each bringing a fresh tale of disaster from the East, and still no practical effect had been given to the Mantuan programme. To judge from the ill-success which attended the attempt to levy Turkish tithes, a Crusade which depended for its finance upon the response made to the Mantuan decrees had a gloomy future before it. Immediately after the close of the Congress collectors armed with Papal letters were dispatched throughout Europe—to England, to the Spanish kingdoms, to Norway, to Sweden, and even to semi-barbarous Lithuania. Everywhere their demands met with blank indifference, if not with actual hostility. Borso d'Este, who had actually signed the decrees authorising the levy, refused to allow tithes to be collected in his dominions.¹ The very Cardinals grumbled and raised objections when they were asked for their contribution. The point of view expressed by the chronicler of Bologna is only too typical of the attitude of Christendom towards the Pope's crusading policy. In Lent 1460, he tells us, the Papal letters were read in the Church of S. Petronio, and every one who refused to pay his tenth or his thirtieth was denied Confession and Communion. But the sole result was that "those who did not wish to pay so heavy a tax ceased to confess or communicate. . . . The Pope said he wanted the money to make war on the Turk; but this was not true, as he intended nothing of the sort. It was an act of robbery, so take heed before you pay your share."²

The plans framed at Mantua were clearly unworkable. If the Pope still persisted, he must devise fresh schemes, and must himself put them into effect. Thrown thus upon his own resources, Pius II turned first to his own peculiar weapon—to the weapon of persuasion, which he had wielded so often and so successfully in bygone years.

¹ Cf. letter of Pius II to Duke Borso, 1 April 1460 (Pastor, vol. iii. Appendix 39, from *Archivio Segreto del Vaticano*).

² *Cronica di Bologna* (Muratori, *Rev. Ital. Script.*, xviii. pp. 732-3).

In the autumn of 1461 he composed his famous letter to the Sultan, in which he sought to convert the Turkish monarch, and to turn him from an enemy into an obedient and honoured son of the Church. The treatise is a masterpiece of eloquence and learning. In lucid terms, Pius contrasted the teaching of Christ with that of the Koran, and set forward the superiority of Christian civilisation. He reminded the Sultan of earlier converts, such as Constantine and Clovis, whose baptism had won whole nations for the Catholic Church. He invited him to come like Pepin and Charlemagne to the aid of the Pope, and to receive, as they had, new benefits at his hands. He rose to heights of impassioned eloquence in depicting the era of universal prosperity which would dawn upon the Sultan's acceptance of Christianity. "O what a fullness of peace it would be! What exultation among Christian people, what joy in the whole earth! The Golden Age of Augustus, sung by the poets, would return. The leopard would lie down with the lamb, the calf with the lion. Swords would be turned into pruning-hooks . . . the wilderness would blossom, the earth would resound with the chaunting of monks. . . . O how great would be your joy if you were the means of bringing so many sheep into the fold of the Eternal Shepherd, if you were the author of peace and welfare among men." ¹

The letter was widely read, and the numerous forgeries which purported to continue the correspondence are proof of the impression which it made. Unfortunately, there is no indication of the effect which it produced on Mahomet II. The cultured patron of scholars and artists must doubtless have appreciated the literary value of the treatise, but, as far as we know, the picture of that half-pagan, half-Christian Utopia painted for him by Pius II left him unmoved. In the following year Pius sought other and sterner weapons. Summoning six of the

¹ Ep. 396 (*Opera*, pp. 872-904) and elsewhere.

Cardinals to his presence, he declared to them his intention of going in person upon a Crusade.

The programme which Pius II unfolded to the startled Cardinals was the fruit of many a sleepless night, when he lay tossing from side to side, his old blood boiling at the shameful thought that nothing had been done in defence of Christendom. Mature reflection impelled him to the conclusion that the only way of stirring sleeping Europe into action was to go himself against the Turks. All doubts as to the sincerity of his purpose would thus be dissipated, and, old and ill as he was, he could at least inspire others by his example. The Duke of Burgundy had vowed to go on a Crusade if another Prince would consent to accompany him. He would be forced to keep his promise, and would bring others in his train. "The noise of our resolve will resound through Christendom like a thunder-clap, rousing the faithful to the defence of religion."¹ The new weapon was, in fact, not extraordinarily unlike the old. Letters and orations had failed to persuade, therefore the Pope had recourse to drama. If the sight of the Head of Christendom preparing to lay down his life for the flock did not dispel the clouds of selfishness and apathy, then indeed Europe must be impervious to persuasion, unable to be touched by any noble and generous appeal.

The Cardinals pronounced the Pope's plan to be worthy of the Vicar of Christ, although numerous difficulties at once occurred to them which might wreck the whole undertaking. Pius, however, had the details at his finger-ends, and was ready with an answer to all their objections. The Crusade, as he freely acknowledged, depended for its success upon the co-operation of Venice, who alone could supply a fleet to transport the Crusaders to the East. He would write confidentially to the Doge on the subject, and on receiving a favourable reply, would send embassies to France and Burgundy, asking aid of the one, and calling

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. vii. p. 191.

on the other to fulfil his vow.¹ The Pope, with Hungary and Venice, supported by the Duke of Burgundy in person, and receiving aid from France, had at least reasonable hope of victory. Meanwhile, a five years' truce must be proclaimed throughout Europe, and money must be raised by means of subsidies from the clergy and the sale of indulgences to the laity.

The Venetian Republic sent a somewhat vague reply to the Pope's letter,² but it was sufficiently favourable to justify the departure of the Bishop of Ferrara upon a mission to France and Burgundy. Louis XI gave him little encouragement. He was inclined to treat the whole matter as a pretext for drawing attention away from the Neapolitan war, and declared that during the next year he would be fully occupied in helping to restore Henry VI to the throne of England. "I will give you four years for that business," was the Bishop's pertinent rejoinder.³ The Pope's proposals were more favourably received at the Burgundian Court. Duke Philip was just recovering from a dangerous illness, and he was awed by the thought that death had all but overtaken him with his crusading vow still unfulfilled. The Bishop set out on his return journey with the assurance that a Burgundian embassy, provided with the fullest instructions, would shortly follow him across the Alps.

In the meantime, two events had occurred in Italy which were calculated to serve the cause of the Crusade. The Doge, Prospero Malipiero, a persistent advocate of peace with the Turk, died on 5 May 1462 and was succeeded by Cristoforo Moro. The same month saw the discovery of the alum mountains at Tolfa, a find as valuable as it was unexpected, which seemed to augur success for the Pope's enterprise.⁴ The discoverer was a certain

¹ Pius II's letter to the Doge is given in *Epistolae*, No. 44, 8 March 1461 (*i.e.* 1462) (ed. Mediol.).

² Cf. Pastor, iii. p. 311.

³ *Commentarii*, lib. ix. p. 221.

⁴ Cf. *Commentarii*, lib. vii. pp. 185-6.

Giovanni de Castro, who had learned the properties of alum as manager of some large dye-works in Constantinople. On the Turkish occupation he had lost his post, and having known Æneas Silvius at Basel, he had come to Rome to seek shelter and employment with his former acquaintance. One day, as he walked among the barren hills near Civitavecchia, he noticed a peculiar herb which he had often seen on the alum mountains of Asia Minor. He picked up some white stones lying near, and found that they had a saltish taste; and on baking them, he saw that they were really alum. Almost beside himself with joy, he sought the Pope's presence. "To-day," he cried, "I bring you victory over the Turk." Every year, as Giovanni explained, the Turk received some three hundred thousand ducats from Christendom for alum. Now he had found seven mountains full of the precious substance, with all advantages for working it, and an excellent harbour near at hand. The Pope could supply alum to the whole of Europe, and his profits would inflict a double injury upon the Turks, in depriving them of a valuable monopoly, and in furnishing Crusaders with the sinews of war. At first Pius could not believe the good news, but experts from Genoa pronounced the Tolfa alum to be not only genuine but of excellent quality. A Company was formed at once, and Pius issued a Bull exhorting all Christians to buy alum only from him.¹ Castro's discovery brought an income of a hundred thousand ducats to the Papacy, and the industry which he founded continues to this day.

The year 1463 was not without promise for the Crusade. The fall of Bosnia seemed at last to have convinced Venice of the danger of delay, and the Republic begged leave of the Pope to collect the Turkish tithes throughout her dominions. In July Bessarion took up his residence in Venice as legate *a latere*.² He found active preparations

¹ Raynaldus, 1463, No. 86, 7 April 1463.

² Cf. Pastor, iii. p. 318. Sanudo says that Bessarion arrived in August.

in progress both by land and sea, and by the end of the month he was able to report that war with the Turk had been declared. Meanwhile a Franciscan friar preached the Crusade upon the Piazza, and inside S. Marco stood a massive iron chest to receive the offerings of the faithful.¹ In Hungary, too, the long quarrel between the Emperor and Matthias Corvinus was brought to an end, and the peace for which Carvajal had laboured so unremittingly was signed at Neustadt on 24 July. An offensive alliance between Hungary and Venice followed two months later. The two powers most nearly affected by the Turk were at length uniting to give him battle.

After three months' *villegiatura* at Tivoli, Pius returned to Rome on 9 September, in order to welcome the much-desired embassy from Burgundy. The visit of the Burgundians was made the occasion for a meeting of Italian envoys in Rome, to discuss ways and means of promoting the Crusade. As usual, many eloquent orations were made, and when the Burgundian representative announced that his master would start for the East at the head of six thousand men in the following spring, no one could say enough in the Duke's praise.² But when the Pope called on the Italians to follow the example of Burgundy and to obey the Mantuan decrees, matters were again brought to a standstill. All approved as private persons of the levy of tithes; none save the Venetians had power as ambassadors to promise contributions. Nothing could be done until the envoys had been to consult their respective Governments. While they went, Pius tried to turn the unwelcome delay to good account by winning over his chief opponents among the Cardinals. The oration which he made to the Sacred College on this occasion³ contains the fullest exposition of his views and policy with regard to the Crusade.

¹ Sanudo, *Vitae Ducum Venetorum* (Muratori, xxii. p. 1174).

² *Commentarii*, lib. xii. p. 332.

³ Mansi, *Orationes*, ii. p. 68; *Commentarii*, lib. xii. pp. 336-41.

Five years, he said, had passed since his accession, yet not until the present time had the state of Italy permitted of anything being done in defence of Christendom. From the first the Crusade had been his ultimate object. "We fought for Christ when we defended Ferrante. We waged war on the Turk when we smote the territories of Sigismondo." Now at last God had sent peace, and the time had come to strike directly at the enemies of the Church. Now was the opportunity for the Cardinals to prove the reality of their devotion, and, disregarding difficulties and discomforts, to follow Christ's Vicar to war. It was useless to advise staying at home and sending money to Hungary for the prosecution of the Crusade. The Papacy no longer had the power of raising money. "Our condition is that of bankers who have lost their credit: no one believes in us; the priesthood is despised." Thus the first step was to restore the reputation of the Papacy, and this could best be done by the means originally employed to build up its greatness. "Abstinence, chastity, zeal for the faith, contempt of death, desire for martyrdom," these had once made the Roman Church mistress of the world. Now was the moment to prove that these virtues were not yet dead, and to rekindle enthusiasm for the Church by a conspicuous example of nobility in its leaders. "The call to go has met with no response; perhaps men will attend better to 'Come.' . . . We do not go to fight. We will imitate Moses, who prayed on the mountain while Israel fought against Amalek. On the ship's prow or on the mountain-top, having before our eyes the Holy Eucharist—that is, our Lord Jesus Christ—we will entreat of Him victory for our soldiers in battle. . . . For God's sake we leave our see and the Roman Church, committing our grey hairs and our feeble body to His mercy. He will not forget us, and if He does not grant us safe return, He will receive us into heaven, and will preserve His see of Rome and His Bride the Church in safety."

The words came from the depth of the Pope's heart,

and, like all outbursts of genuine enthusiasm, they proved irresistibly infectious. Some of the Cardinals, such as the vicious and scheming Bishop of Arras, remained unmoved, but the majority declared themselves ready to throw in their lot with the Pope. Carvajal, whose task in Hungary had at times been made more difficult by the Pope's timid diplomacy, was now finally convinced of his sincerity. "Until to-day," he exclaimed, "I have thought you a man. Now I believe you to be an angel. You have won me to your opinion. May God be with your enterprise. I will be your companion, and by sea and by land I will be ever at your side. Should your way lead through the flames I would still follow you, for you are treading the straight path to heaven."¹

During these busy weeks of negotiation and preparation Pius was, indeed, seen at his best. Now that the decisive step was taken, the weaker elements of his character seemed to fall from him like a cast-off garment, while his high courage, boundless energy, and immense capacity for detail called forth the admiration of all who came in contact with him. Day and night he laboured for the cause, organising, contriving, entreating, censuring, and although results for the most part fell short of his expectations, his persistence was such that almost every one concerned found himself pledged to do considerably more than he had intended. A commission of Cardinals was appointed to collect the necessary funds, while the Pope's private treasurer, Niccolò Piccolomini, had charge of a special Crusade account-book, in which all details of receipt and expenditure were recorded. The discovery of this book, bound in red morocco, and stamped with the Papal arms, goes far to disprove the charges of mismanagement and neglect which have been freely raised against Pius II's preparations for war.²

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. xii. p. 341.

² Cf. Pastor, iii. p. 336. The account-book is preserved in the *Archivio di Stato*, Rome.

As the autumn advanced the plague broke out in Rome with unusual severity. Many fled the city, but Pius remained at his post. Among his chief cares was the creation of a fleet, and he himself undertook to provide three galleys as well as several smaller vessels. Seven Cardinals promised to equip a galley apiece, and others were expected from various Italian powers.¹ The Pope's dearest wish was to obtain the services of Francesco Sforza as leader of the Papal forces. The *condottiere* Duke, however, was no enthusiast. He was prepared to send a contingent to the East which would satisfy the claims of friendship and be worthy of his dignity, but not even for Pius II would he jeopardise his throne in order to go on an expedition which he regarded as fantastic and chimerical. His refusal was a bitter disappointment to Pius.² No less disheartening was the apathy of Siena, who after endless delay offered the miserly sum of 3000 ducats as her contribution to the Crusade. On the Pope's remonstrance the contribution was raised to 10,000 ducats, which Pius accepted with gratitude, for love of his country, he tells us, and not because he thought it adequate. Meanwhile the representatives of the Italian powers returned to Rome with their answers. Genoa, Savoy, and Montferrat vouchsafed no reply, but the other States consented to abide by the Mantuan decrees. Florence said that she could do nothing at the moment, for fear of injuring the numerous Florentine merchants living in Constantinople; but her envoy reported that steps were being taken to remove the merchants and their goods to a place of safety and that, when this was accomplished, Florence would be ready to take her proper share in the enterprise.³ On 19 October an offensive alliance against the Turk was signed by the Pope, Venice, and Burgundy, and three days later the Bull *Ezechielis*,

¹ Cf. Sanudo (Muratori, xxii. 1178).

² The Pope's letter to Sforza is given in Mansi, iii. p. 103; Sforza's answer in *Opera*, Ep. 392.

³ *Commentarii*, lib. xii. p. 342.

publishing the Crusade, was read in a public Consistory.¹ The Romans at once raised a protest, fearing the loss they would incur by the Pope's departure, and they were only partially reassured by the promise that the chief officials of the Curia should remain at their posts. Nevertheless, the reading of the Bull produced a profound impression. Many who had been inclined to treat the whole enterprise as a fantasy began to see that the Crusade might prove both heroic and successful. All depended on the effective co-operation of the Pope and Burgundy. "May God, whose cause is at stake, grant long life to the Pope and the Duke,"² wrote the Milanese ambassador at the conclusion of his report on the proceedings. During the Consistory Pius was suffering so acutely from gout in the feet that he could hardly manage to hide his anguish, and directly it was over he retired to bed. Yet he was happy in the midst of his pain, because he realised that his efforts had borne fruit—at last the Crusade was being taken seriously.

The Bull *Ezechielis* was published throughout Europe, and it roused instant support from the lower classes. In Germany, the princes were content to answer the Papal legates with fair words, but "the people forsook their wagons and ploughs and hastened to Rome to take arms against the Turk."³ Meanwhile everything in the political situation seemed to pave the way for departure. Success attended the Venetians in the East. The submission of Malatesta terminated the long struggle in the March. The death of the Prince of Taranto left Ferrante in undisputed possession of practically the whole kingdom of Naples. Above all, the Venetian Republic seemed as zealous for the Crusade as the Pope himself could wish. On 25 October, Pius addressed a letter to the Doge urging him to join the Crusade in person. "We shall be three

¹ The Bull is given in *Opera*, as Ep. 412. Cf. *Commentarii*, lib. xii. p. 344.

² Otto Carretto to the Duke of Milan, 25 Oct. 1463 (Pastor, iii. p. 333, from the original in *Bib. Ambrosiana*, Milano).

³ Pastor, iii. p. 334, from the *Hamburg Chronicle*.

old men," he said, "and God rejoices in a trinity. Our trinity will be aided by the Trinity of heaven, and our foes will be confounded before our eyes."¹ The letter was discussed in the Senate, where the Doge pleaded his advancing years as an excuse for not acceding to the Pope's request. His colleagues, however, were determined that he should go, and, after the manner of Venetians, they sacrificed the individual to the Republic without hesitation or pity. "If your Serene Highness will not embark of your own free will we will use force," said one of those present; "we value the honour and welfare of this city more than your person."² Thus Pius began to look forward with some degree of confidence to setting sail for the East in the coming spring. The concluding words of the twelfth book of the *Commentaries*, written on 1 January 1464, breathe the atmosphere of the moment. From them we learn the condition of the Pope's mind as the new year dawned. "Now no further obstacle remained in the way of Pope Pius's expedition against the Turk, and it seemed likely that much might occur to prosper it. Fortified by these considerations he applied himself to his task, making vast preparations of all things necessary for war; on which beginnings may God have mercy."³

The year 1464 brought a rude awakening from Pius II's dreams of a glorious and successful Crusade. What he regarded as a promising beginning was in reality a climax. He had done his utmost, and the response which his enthusiasm had evoked concealed for a moment the real hollowness of the crusading plans. Now, during seven weary months of disappointment and disillusionment, the Pope was to learn that he had striven in vain, and that his great venture was doomed to failure. The brief span

¹ Cf. Raynaldus, 1463, No. 41, and Malipiero, *Annali Veneti* (*Arch. Stor. Ital.*, t. vii. pt. I, 1st series, p. 18).

² Sanudo (Muratori, xxii. p. 1174).

³ *Commentarii*, lib. xii. p. 447.

of life that remained to him was spent in futile effort and pitiable struggling against the inevitable. Nevertheless, this last phase of his career is fashioned upon nobler lines than those which preceded it. Pius, the calculating, ambitious climber, who had faced facts so remorselessly all his life, ceased to face them now. He owed much of his success in life to his refusal to attempt what he could not reasonably expect to accomplish. He died a martyr to a hopeless cause. The failure of these last months is raised from ignominy to something approaching grandeur by his inability to acknowledge that he was beaten.

CHAPTER XV

THE LAST JOURNEY

MUTUAL jealousy among the Italian States, absorption in their own affairs on the part of the Princes of Europe—these two causes are mainly responsible for the tragedy of the next few months. In Italy the crux of the situation lay with Venice. The isolation, the wealth, and the almost unvarying success of the Republic of S. Mark had already earned the hatred of her neighbours, and the fact that Venice was to play a prominent part in the Crusade at once discredited it in Italian eyes. Florence looked upon the whole enterprise as a deep-laid plot by which other States would be made to fight the battles of Venice. Her envoy actually advised the Pope to leave Venice and the Turk to weaken each other, and thus, by a simple policy of non-interference, to free Italy from a double danger. Pius II's reply to this proposal was a stern indictment of the Florentines, who "would allow everything to go to perdition if only their own Republic were saved."¹ Nevertheless, there was little love lost between the Pope and the Venetians, and, at heart, he was as sceptical as Florence as to the motives which inspired their present activity. The sons of Venice, he said, were merchants, and they "expended gold only in order to obtain gold." "Foolish is the thought of him who deems that these people can be persuaded to noble deeds unless they bring with them tangible utility." In his opinion, the primary object of

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. xii. p. 334.

Venice was the conquest of the Morea; the customs of the province were worth three thousand ducats a year, and its situation made it likely to become the "centre of the world's commerce," should it pass under Venetian rule.¹ Thus Pius laboured under no illusions with regard to Venice, but he also realised that he was dependent upon her aid, and so he had determined to co-operate with her loyally. Venice, however, had no real desire for a common war against the Turk. Her object throughout was to divert the Pope's attention to the mainland campaign, conducted by Hungary, in order that she might be left with unfettered control over the naval operations. The preparations for the equipment of the Papal fleet filled the Venetian envoy in Rome with uneasiness, and in January 1464 he began to say openly that it would be far better for the Pope not to go on the Crusade in person.² The diplomatic documents of the time force us to the conclusion that the endless negotiations over the vessels to be supplied by Venice for transport, the puerile excuses and the interminable delays, all formed part of a deliberate scheme for hoodwinking the Pope and making him serve the purposes of the Republic. It was a cruel deception, yet it was eminently characteristic of Venetian policy. "What do fishes care about justice?" Pius had once said. "As among animals there is least reason in the inhabitants of the water, so of all the human race the Venetians are least just and least merciful. They reverence their Republic as a god, and nothing else is holy to them, nothing sacred. They hold that just which serves their Republic, holy which increases their dominion."³

A worse blow had still to fall. Pius spent Lent and Easter at Siena, and here, on Good Friday, he received a letter containing such mournful news that he could

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. xii. pp. 314-5; Cugnoni, pp. 228-9.

² Cf. Pastor, iii. p. 364, quoting from the dispatch of the Milanese ambassador, 18 Jan. 1464.

³ Cugnoni, p. 225.

only speak of it as "appropriate to the day of the Lord's Passion." ¹ It announced that the Duke of Burgundy had, at the instance of his suzerain Louis XI, postponed his departure for the East for another year. All recognised that this decision was tantamount to a total withdrawal from the Crusade. A year's delay at Pius II's age was out of the question, and although the Duke promised to send his illegitimate son with a respectable contingent of troops at the date originally fixed, not even the Pope appears to have put faith in his word. "Every tower must fall at last, if it is persistently bombarded by cannon," ² is Pius II's comment on the catastrophe. Burgundy had, in truth, succumbed before the repeated attacks of the peace party, headed by the arch-enemy of the Crusade and of the Pope alike, Louis XI of France.

With the defection of Burgundy vanished the last vestige of hope for a successful Crusade, and the path of wisdom at this point was undoubtedly to abandon the whole enterprise. Many were the voices which urged this course upon the heart-broken Pope. The condition of his health made it increasingly improbable that he would be able to bear the discomfort and fatigue of the voyage. Already every movement caused him pain, and the difficulty of conveying him from place to place increased with each day's journey. On his return to Rome, towards the end of May, he was seized with a fresh attack of fever and gout. The distracted Cardinals besought him to remain at home, but his heart was set on the expedition, and he expressed his determination to persevere even at the cost of his life. "Every day seems to him like a year, so anxious is the Holy Father to reach Ancona and to set sail." ³ So

¹ *Commentarii*, lib. xiii. p. 374 (printed as an Appendix to Voigt, *Pius II*, vol. ii.).

² *Commentarii*, lib. xiii. p. 372. According to Malipiero (*Annali Veneti*, p. 27), the Duke of Milan and the Florentines intrigued with the King of France to prevent Burgundy from going on the Crusade.

³ Antonio Ricavo to the Marquis of Mantua, 10 April 1464 (*Pastor* iii. p. 347).

wrote the Mantuan ambassador in April. Meanwhile Francesco Sforza was doing his utmost to dissuade his friend from embarking.¹ His envoys in Rome waxed eloquent upon the manifold perils and inevitable disaster which must accompany the Crusade, and Sforza even offered to mediate between Pius and Louis XI, if the former would postpone his departure. The Pope, however, was not to be moved. He knew that Francesco Sforza, as the friend of France and the enemy of Venice, had personal reasons for disliking the Crusade. Therefore he regarded all his arguments with suspicion, and Sforza was forced to confess his inability to overcome the Pope's "Sienese obstinacy."²

Meanwhile the final preparations for departure were being made. At Pisa, Cardinal Forteguerria superintended the equipment of the Papal fleet. Crusaders were flocking in their thousands to Italy, and the Archbishop of Crete was appointed to take charge of them. Many were quite unfitted for war, and the majority were ill equipped. Thus the Archbishop had to grapple with the double problem of persuading the unemployable to return to their homes and of providing arms for those capable of bearing them. On 11 June, Cardinal Piccolomini was appointed Vicar in Rome and in the Papal States. A week later, Pius II left the city. The story of his long-drawn-out martyrdom, of the slow and painful journey to the coast beneath the burning skies of an Italian summer, of the weary wait at Ancona amid heat and plague and disappointment, and of the death which finally brought release,—this can best be told by the Pope's devoted disciple, Jacopo Ammanati, Cardinal of Pavia. For the greater part of the time he was Pius's closest companion, and he was strengthened to endure his own share of discomfort by the example of patience and

¹ Cf. the dispatches of the Milanese envoys quoted by Pastor, iii. pp. 350 *seq.*

² Francesco Sforza, Instruction to the French Ambassador, 10 August 1464: "Nuy gli dessuademo tale andata et faremo el possibile perche non passi della ; benche l'habia el cervello Senese" (Pastor, iii. Appendix 62. From Cod. 1611, *Fonds. Ital.*, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris).

fortitude presented to him by his master. Having been present "up to his last breath, hanging upon his lips," he wrote a full account of the events of these sad weeks to Cardinal Piccolomini. "Gladly do I think and speak of our Pius," writes the sorrowing friend. "By so doing I alleviate my longing for the departed and find comfort."¹

On 18 June, Ammanati tells us, Pius took the Cross in S. Peter's, and was borne in his litter to the Ponte Molle, where he took leave of the crowd of prelates and citizens and embarked in a barge upon the Tiber. This was a slow means of travel, but it caused him the least discomfort, and for the next four days the barge pursued its leisurely course up stream. Halts for the night were made at Castel Giubileo, Fiano, and the Benedictine monastery at the foot of Soracte, but on each occasion the Pope himself remained on board. The incidents of the journey show us the Pius that we have always known, of undaunted spirit and quick sympathy. Although weakened and unnerved by illness, he exerted himself to perform the business which each day brought, and he was keenly alive to everything that went on around him. On the second day he was deeply distressed by the death of a bargeman, a youth of about twenty, who fell into a deep part of the river and was drowned before his eyes. "The Pope lay long silent, with tears in his eyes, praying for the departed." Later on, he found that the inhabitants of a village on the right bank of the Tiber had made great preparations to welcome him as he passed. The barge was then being towed from the left bank, but the Pope ordered the course to be changed, so that the people might not be disappointed, or feel that their outlay had been wasted. Meanwhile letters came from the Archbishop of Crete, telling of the difficulty of controlling the impatient crowds at Ancona, and begging that some strong man might be sent with sufficient authority to quell disturbances among the would-

¹ *Jacobi Card. Pap. Epistolae*, Ep. 41. Cf. also *Commentarii*, lib. i. pp. 354 seq.

be Crusaders. The Pope's thoughts at once flew to Carvajal, who, as Ammanati gratefully recalls, "loved our Pius above others, and constantly aided him in his holy enterprise." It grieved him to impose so heavy a task on an old man, already worn out in the service of the Church ; but he had no alternative, and Carvajal promptly responded to the call. "Holy Father," he said, "if you consider me the person most fitted for the work, I will at once obey your command. I will follow your example, for I know that you are laying down your life for your flock. You write to me to come, and I am here. You bid me go, and I depart. I cannot refuse this little end of my life to Christ." Such whole-hearted devotion acted like a tonic upon the Pope. He invited Carvajal and Ammanati to dine with him that evening, and talked of nothing throughout the meal but of his longing to set sail.

At Otricoli the Pope exchanged the barge for a litter, and was carried by slow and painful stages up the Tiber valley. Along that same road he had gone five years before, at the outset of his Pontificate, full of hope and enthusiasm, on his way to the Congress of Mantua. Then the journey itself had been a source of delight to him, and the fair Umbrian cities had never welcomed a more eager sight-seer. Now he could not endure more than six or seven miles travelling in the day, and the curtains of his litter were drawn, in order that he might be spared the sight of the companies of disappointed Crusaders who were already wending their way back from Ancona. At Terni, trouble befell the faithful Ammanati. He had sat up late into the night writing for the Pope, clad in the lightest of attire owing to the great heat. When at last he retired to rest, he was conscious of being seized by a sudden chill. On the morrow, Pius found that the journey to Spoleto was beyond his strength, so he settled to pause for the night at a half-way house, keeping Ammanati with him, while the rest of the company went on ahead. Ammanati did not wish to distress the Pope, and therefore said nothing

of his own plight. He slept uncomplainingly in a draughty tent at his master's side, and, in consequence, arrived at Spoleto on the following day in a raging fever. He had perforce to be left behind, while the Pope went on his way, striking across the Apennines from Assisi to Fabriano, and thence to Ancona.

On 19 July the weary pilgrimage was ended, and Pius took up his residence in the episcopal palace, adjoining the ancient Cathedral of San Ciriaco on Monte Guasco. This was at the northern extremity of Ancona, and the palace commanded a magnificent view of the sea and harbour. The fair prospect and the refreshing breezes brought some relief to the Pope, but there was little else to encourage him. His relations with Ancona had not been entirely harmonious, and so little did the citizens appreciate the honour of a Papal visit that they had biers with corpses of straw carried through the streets, in order to give the impression of a plague-stricken city and to make the Pope defer his coming.¹ Still the Venetian ships failed to make their appearance, and still bands of Crusaders continued to leave Ancona in disgust, until it seemed as if the tardy fleet would soon find no troops to transport. Pius clung to the possibility of a Crusade, but, outside his chamber, the prevailing topic of the hour, was his own approaching end, and diplomatists had already begun to write and speak of the next Conclave.²

Meanwhile, Ammanati recovered from his fever, and hastened to Ancona, arriving on 25 July, just a month after he had parted from the Pope at Spoleto. The night before his arrival he had been troubled by a strange dream. It seemed to him that he was back in Rome, at the Vatican: all the doors stood open, there were no guards; the walls were bare of tapestries, and the beds

¹ *Chronicon Eugubinum* (Muratori, xxi. p. 1007).

² Cf. Pastor, vol. iii. p. 360, who mentions a cipher letter on the subject from the Archbishop of Milan to Francesco Sforza, dated 31 July 1464, Ancona.



PIUS II AT ANCONA

Fresco by Pintoricchio

Piccolomini Library, Siena

were stripped of their coverings. After wandering unhindered through the deserted palace, Ammanati entered the Pope's own apartment, which stood empty as the rest. In despair, he sought some one to tell him the meaning of this scene of desolation, and he came upon a young kinsman of the Pope, the nephew of Goro Lolli, who told him in faltering tones to seek the Chapel. Here he found the Cardinals assembled, and everything arranged as for a Conclave. While he stood speechless with grief, the bitter truth gradually dawning upon him, one of the company addressed him with mocking words. "Wherefore do you grieve? Do you not know that the death of Pius has broken our bonds, and that we are free?" In the stress of his sorrow, Ammanati awoke to find his face wet with tears. The news which greeted him at Ancona was sufficiently grave to seem like a confirmation of his vision. "What of our Pius, Ambrogio?" was his eager inquiry of the first member of the household whom he met. "Pavia mine, he grows weaker and more weary every day," was the sad reply. "He is gradually sinking, and we cannot hope to keep him for a month longer." Ammanati hastened to the Pope's chamber, where Pius was lying on his couch transacting business with the referendaries. Seeing him again after a month's absence, it seemed to Ammanati that all his features had fallen in, and it was as much as the faithful friend could do to keep a calm face as he bent to kiss his hand. Yet even now the Pope's spirit triumphed over his physical strength, and he began to talk eagerly of the Crusade and its prospects, as if there were no thought of death coming to prevent his voyage. A few days later, Pius and Carvajal were on fire to start at once, with what ships they could muster, to the relief of Ragusa. Ammanati could do nothing to turn the two enthusiasts from their project, until the news came that the siege was raised, and that the danger was no longer imminent.

On 12 August the weary watchers at Ancona learned

at last that the Venetian fleet was in sight. The Cardinals went in state to meet the Doge,¹ and Pius was carried to his window to watch the twelve sumptuously equipped galleys ride into the harbour. It was a beauteous sight, Ammanati tells us, but it came too late to be anything but a pageant. That very night Pius took a turn for the worse, and the next morning he made what proved to be his last communion. This was on 13 August, two days before the Festival of the Assumption, a date which must have been associated in Pius's mind with gala days of his earliest childhood and with many a happy memory of student-life in Siena. On that day he looked forward to receiving the Blessed Sacrament once more, in honour of the Virgin, the liege Lady of his Republic, and the object of his lifelong devotion. Only a week or two before, he had visited the famous sanctuary at Loreto and had offered a golden chalice upon Our Lady's altar, imploring her blessing upon his great endeavour.² Now he lay dying as the Festival of her Assumption drew near.

After Vespers on the Vigil, the Cardinals present at Ancona were summoned to the Pope's side to receive his farewell blessing. "My beloved brethren," he began, "my last hour approaches; God calls me hence: I die in the Catholic Faith in which I have lived. Believe me that until this day I have done my utmost for the flock, and have spared myself neither toil nor danger. I have not the power to finish what I have begun, the rest must be left to you. Persevere in this work of God, and do not allow the cause of religion to languish through your negligence. . . . Be mindful of your office, be mindful of your Redeemer, who sees all things and rewards every man according to his work. . . . Have care also of the

¹ Sanudo (Muratori, xxii. p. 1180), who says that the Cardinal of Pavia and two Bishops came on board the Doge's galley to make Pius II's excuses, saying that he had had a bad night, so could not come himself. Cf. also Malipiero, p. 30.

² Cf. Voigt, iii. pp. 717-8, and Tursellinus, *Lauretanae historiae*, lib. ii. cap. 1.

temporalities, and see that the Patrimony of the Church suffers no harm. . . . Moreover, brethren, my dealings with you, both as Cardinal and as Pope, have not been without sin. For my sins against God, may He, the Almighty, have mercy on me; for my offences against you, beloved, I pray you to forgive me, now at the hour of my death. My relations and those who have served me, I commend to your care. Farewell, brethren; may the peace of God be with you.”¹ At first no one could speak for weeping, and then Bessarion said a few words in the name of all. Only the Pope’s humility, he said, made him ask their pardon, for he had always been a kind and indulgent father, and they had no cause of complaint against him. He had set a noble example to his flock; his death would be not only a personal loss to the Cardinals but a blow to Christendom. All knelt in turn to kiss the Pope’s hand as he blessed them, saying, “May the God of pity pardon you.” Then the Cardinals departed, intending to return in the morning for Mass, which was to be sung in the Pope’s chamber with Ammanati celebrating.

But this “last farewell,” as Ammanati touchingly calls it, was not to be. “Everything being thus prepared for the sacred rite, behold, as the sun sank, Pius too began to sink.” He received extreme unction, and was left alone with his nephew Andrea, Ammanati, Goro Lolli, and the three Bishops attached to his household. This little company of devoted friends stood round his bed, ministering to his last wants. Presently his eye fell on Ammanati. “Pray for me, my son,” he whispered, “for I am a sinner.” Then, turning towards the crucifix, he began to sigh out, “Have mercy upon me, O God, have mercy upon me; and thou, most merciful Virgin, do not fail thy dying servant. For thy Son’s sake, receive my departing soul.” After an interval, he spoke once more to Ammanati. “Keep the continuation of our holy

¹ *Card. Pap. Epistolae*, Ep. 41, pp. 487-8.

enterprise in the mind of the brethren, and aid it with all your power. Woe unto you, woe unto you, if you desert God's work." Ammanati struggled to answer through his tears, whereupon the Pope put his hand on his shoulder saying, "Do good, my son, and pray God for me." These were the last words he spoke. He lay listening to the commendatory prayers until about three hours after sunset, when "he surrendered his spirit to God so peacefully that he seemed to have passed into sleep and not into death."

So died Pius II on the Eve of the Assumption, with his great work unfinished, surrounded by many ill-wishers and detractors who refused to the last to believe in the sincerity of his purpose. Yet in the eyes of a few devoted admirers, and of those who knew him most intimately, his death was the crowning glory of a great career. They could afford to despise evil tongues and words spoken in hatred, being content to await the calmer judgment of posterity, which would do justice and paint the picture as they saw it. For themselves, they rested upon the sure belief that he who had lived nobly, and died a martyr's death, was "in Abraham's bosom, tasting heavenly joys with the spirits of the blest." ¹

From the moment of Pius II's death the Crusade was doomed. There were at most three members of the Sacred College—Bessarion, Carvajal, and Ammanati—who would have wished to continue the struggle, and without their leader they were powerless. The rest of the Cardinals were at one with the Doge of Venice in regarding the Pope's death as a Heaven-sent release from difficulties and dangers to which they had been forced to expose themselves by the misplaced enthusiasm of their chief. For some time past the Venetians had looked upon Pius with deep-rooted suspicion. In July, peace with the Turks had actually been debated in the Venetian Senate, on the ground that the Pope was only awaiting an opportunity of withdrawing

¹ *Card. Pap. Epistolae*, Ep. 41, p. 490.

from the Crusade and leaving Venice to face the infidel single-handed.¹ When the fleet anchored in the harbour at Ancona, common gossip on the Doge's galley retailed the Pope's manifest disappointment on hearing of the arrival of the Venetians. He had promised to accompany the Doge to the East, it was said, and now that his companion in arms was actually at Ancona, "he was very sorry, for it displeased him to break his promise, and it displeased him still more to go on the Crusade."² Nothing could be farther from the truth than this Venetian conception of one whose dying mind was possessed by a single overmastering passion—the desire to embark forthwith upon his holy enterprise. It is, however, an instructive illustration of the entire absence of understanding between Pius II and Venice. Each regarded the other with jealousy and suspicion, and their mutual relations were such as to ensure the failure of their common undertaking, if circumstances had allowed them to embark upon it. The excuses proffered by the Cardinals on behalf of their master first gave the Doge an inkling of the Pope's true condition. Suspicious to the last, he determined to investigate on his own account, and he sent his doctor to make private inquiries from the Papal physicians. The doctor's opinion, on his return to the Venetian galleys, was that the Pope was dying.³ It was with heart-felt relief that the Doge learned, next day, that this prediction was confirmed, and that Pius II had breathed his last.

Interminable delay marked the proceedings which brought the unwilling Crusaders to Ancona; the preparations for departure, on the other hand, were equally remarkable for their rapidity. The contrast between the outward and the homeward journey goes far to prove that Pius II himself was the sole vital force of the crusading movement. During the festival of the Assumption the Pope's body lay in the Cathedral of S. Ciriaco. On that

¹ Malipiero, *Annali Veneti*, p. 28.

² *Loc. cit.*, pp. 29–30.

³ Sanudo, p. 1180, and Malipiero, p. 30.

day the Doge came to pay his tribute of respect to the departed, and immediately afterwards he had a conference with the Cardinals on the subject of the Crusade. From the report of the Milanese ambassador, we learn that the Doge's demands were "most difficult and arduous, and impossible to the College," and the general impression which he gave was that the Venetians were heartily sick of the whole enterprise.¹ The upshot of the conference was that the Cardinals decided to hand over their galleys to the Doge, for use against the Turk, and to transmit the money collected for the Crusade through him to the King of Hungary. Thus 40,000 ducats and five galleys were placed in the Doge's charge, the latter with the proviso that they should be returned to the Cardinals if the new Pope decided to go on a Crusade.² On 17 August Pius II's heart was buried in the choir of S. Ciriaco, where a marble slab now marks the spot, and his body set out along the road to Rome which he had traversed so painfully only a few weeks before. On the following evening the Doge sailed for Venice,³ while the Cardinals hastened to Rome in order to be ready for the Conclave. The proceedings on this occasion were remarkable for their dispatch. When the result of the first scrutiny was made known, it was found that the Venetian, Cardinal Barbo, had been elected Pope. The news was received with unparalleled rejoicing in Venice. "God, who does not abandon those who trust in Him, has shown His power," commented Malipiero. "Pope Pius having brought this city into manifest peril, He has caused him to die, and has willed that Pope Paul II should be chosen in his place."⁴ So ended the last attempt at a common enterprise against the Turk on the part of the Christian powers. Pius II's abortive expedition proved that the era of Crusades had vanished, never to return.

¹ Cf. Pastor, vol. iii. p. 371, quoting letters from Ancona to the Duke of Milan and C. Simonetta, 16 August and 24 August 1464.

² Cf. Malipiero, p. 31; Sanudo, p. 1181; *Chron. Eugub.*, 1008. Ammanati gives 48,000 ducats.

³ Cf. Pastor, iii. p. 373.

⁴ Malipiero, 30 August 1464, p. 31.

Henceforth the battle against Islam was waged by two powers alone. Hungary fought for her very existence on the eastern frontiers of Europe. Venice continued to struggle and to bargain with her chief maritime and commercial rival in the Mediterranean.

The body of Pius II was laid to rest in S. Peter's, in the Chapel of S. Andrew, and a monument was erected to his memory by Cardinal Piccolomini. "It cost me three thousand ducats," the Cardinal wrote some years later, "not including the provision for masses and anniversary celebrations during the last thirty-five years."¹ He also made arrangements for his own burial "at the feet of his sainted uncle," and composed an inscription for his tomb. Here uncle and nephew slept undisturbed until, in 1610, the Chapel of S. Andrew was destroyed by Paul V to make room for his own building in S. Peter's. A new resting-place had therefore to be found for the Piccolomini Popes, and none could have been more appropriate than that which offered itself in the Church of S. Andrea della Valle. The Theatine church and convent of S. Andrea della Valle had been founded only twenty years earlier on the site of the Piccolomini palace in Rome. The Palazzo di Siena, as it was popularly called, had been built in the most sumptuous style by Cardinal Piccolomini between the years 1460 and 1472.² It had since been the headquarters of the Piccolomini family in Rome, and in 1582 it had passed into the possession of Costanza, the widowed Duchess of Amalfi, descended through her father from Pius II's nephew Antonio, and through her mother Silvia from the younger nephew Andrea.³ Costanza was the last of her line. The Duchy of Amalfi had already passed into other hands, and in 1610 she herself died in a convent at Naples. On the death of her mother Silvia, in 1482, she made over her palace in Rome to the Theatines, on

¹ Attilio Boni, *La Chiesa di S. Andrea della Valle*, Roma, 1908, p. 27.

² Cf. A. Boni, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-2.

³ See above, Chapter XII. p. 265.

condition that they "should not cease to pray for us, and for the soul of our departed mother."¹ In 1491 the first stone of S. Andrea was laid, but the work had not long been completed when Cardinal Alessandro Peretti, the nephew of Sixtus v, determined to build "a larger and more splendid church" than that which already existed. The architect Maderno was charged with the task, and he was at work on the present Church of S. Andrea from 1601 until his death in 1629.² Thus it was under his auspices and those of Cardinal Peretti that the remains of Pius II and his nephew were transferred to their last home. In 1614, the two monuments, "restored and embellished" by Cardinal Peretti, were fixed in their present place. The bodies, however, were not moved until nine years later. They remained during the interval in the ancient sarcophagi which can still be seen in the Vatican Crypts.³ Owing to the delay in transferring the bodies, the idea gained credence that this was never done, and that the monuments in S. Andrea were only empty shells. The testimony of a manuscript diary, preserved among the Theatine Archives, leaves no doubt as to the actual course of events. This relates that "on 6 January 1623, with the consent of Pope Gregory xv, the bodies of Pius II and Pius III were translated from S. Peter's to our Church of S. Andrea, two hours after sunset, quietly and without ceremony." "I, Giuseppe Beati," adds the diarist, "saw them with my own eyes, and touched with my hands the clothes, the bones, the mitre, and the gloves."⁴

The two monuments, which face each other over corresponding arches in the nave of S. Andrea della Valle, have suffered from the vicissitudes of their history. Owing to Peretti's additions and to their uncomfortably high position on the walls of Maderno's church, they do not breathe the

¹ Letter of Costanza Piccolomini, 10 Jan. 1582. Cf. A. Boni, *op. cit.*, pp. 6 and 7.

² *Op. cit.*

³ Cf. D. Dufresne, *Les Cryptes Vaticanes*.

⁴ Attilio Boni, *op. cit.*, p. 27, giving extracts from a private diary of the years 1582-1661.



TOMB OF PIUS II
S. ANDREA DELLA VALLE. ROME

spirit of Pius II. The elaborate design, the long inscriptions, and the six virtues set in niches outside the principal reliefs form too ornate a memorial for one nurtured in the simple artistic ideals of the early Renaissance. Nevertheless, the reliefs themselves are such as he would have appreciated. In the centre of the first relief the Madonna sits enthroned. On one side Æneas kneels in Cardinal's robes, and S. Paul smiles kindly upon him, as if recognising that he too had erred in early life and afterwards repented of his errors. On the opposite side S. Peter presents the Papal keys to Pius II. Below this group is the urn containing the body, surmounted by an effigy of the Pope, and below again is a representation of the entry of S. Andrew's head into Rome, the event of his Pontificate which Pius himself would most desire to commemorate. The inscription which follows summarises the events of his six years' reign: "He held a Congress at Mantua for the defence of the faith. He resisted the enemies of the Papacy within and without Italy. He numbered Catherine of Siena among Christ's saints. He annulled the Pragmatic Sanction in France. He restored Ferdinand of Aragon to the kingdom of Sicily. He raised the estate of the Church. He instituted alum works at Tolfa. A lover of justice and religion, most admirable in eloquence, he made ready a fleet and enjoined the Doge of Venice and his Senate to be his fellow-warriors for Christ in the Turkish war. He died at Ancona, and was brought back to Rome and buried in S. Peter's, in the place where he had enshrined the head of S. Andrew the Apostle when it came to him from Peloponnesus." ¹

Such, in brief, is the history of Pius II's Pontificate; and, as the record of one man's achievement during six short years, it is by no means to be despised. Nevertheless, it was very soon recognised that his claim to greatness

¹ Cf. *La Chiesa di S. Andrea della Valle: Storia, Monumenti, Restauri*, Roma, 1907 (published in honour of the reopening of S. Andrea after restoration in 1907).

did not rest upon his work as Pope alone. During the century and a half which followed his death, the numerous printed editions of his writings which made their appearance in all parts of Europe testify to the growth of his literary reputation. It is one of the ironies of fortune that Germany, which had failed to appreciate Æneas while he was attached to the Imperial Court, should have been foremost in recognising his merits as a man of letters. This was partly due to what may be described as a commercial instinct. The Germans despised Æneas's devotion to the classics for their own sake, but when they saw that the cult of poets and orators led to the throne of S. Peter, they began to realise that such studies were more valuable than they had supposed. Yet it was also due to real literary development. Æneas had planted humanism upon German soil, and in the next generation his work bore fruit. "The German nation owes much to you. Through your teaching and example you have introduced her to the ancient glory of Roman eloquence and to humanist studies. In these she will increase from day to day." ¹ So spoke Æneas's old friend, Johann Hinderbach, when he came to render the obedience of Germany to Pius II in 1459. He did not do more than justice to Æneas's influence upon German letters. In 1466 this same Hinderbach introduced Æneas's treatise on Education to the Empress Leonora, for the benefit of her young son Maximilian. In this brilliant prince the ideals of humanism which had been propagated by Æneas were fully realised; future generations have recognised in him the flower of Renaissance culture in Germany.

The German nations have, from the first, accomplished the lion's share of the work of collecting, printing, and editing the writings of Æneas Silvius. The earliest attempt at a collected edition of his works appeared in Basel in 1551, under the somewhat misleading title, *Opera quae extant omnia*. From that day the labours of German

¹ Cf. Voigt, vol. ii. p. 357.

scholars have constantly brought fresh material to light, and we still await the later volumes of Dr. Wolkan's monumental edition of Æneas's letters. Yet it was not only in Germany that our hero's books were read and circulated. The list of books printed by the first Paris Press in the Sorbonne between 1470 and 1472 includes two volumes by Æneas Silvius.¹ Tudor England delighted in *The most excellent Historie of Euryalus and Lucrecia*, and in 1570 one Alexander Barclay published *Certayne Egloges gathered out of a booke named in Latin MISERIAE CURIALIUM, compiled by Æneas Silvius, Poet and Orator*.

It has been unfortunate for Æneas's literary reputation that the printed editions of the *Commentaries* give the name of the German scribe, Gobellinus, as the author of this his greatest work.² These editions, moreover, have suffered at the hands of an expurgator whose sense of propriety was considerably more developed than his literary instinct. The *Commentaries*, like their author, have had a chequered career, and it is only of comparatively recent years that it has been possible to unravel the tangled threads of their history. Apart from the overwhelming weight of internal evidence, both Campano and Platina testify to the fact that Pius II was the true author of the *Commentaries*. Campano not only knew of their existence, but the Pope had actually given him the manuscript to read and correct. On reading them, he found them altogether too admirable for him to profane by the touch of an alien hand. "He gave them me to correct, but I did not correct them," Campano wrote to Ammanati.³ In 1883 Dr. Pastor discovered a manuscript in the Vatican which is without doubt the original of the *Commentaries*, written partly by the Pope himself, partly

¹ Cf. A. Claudin, *The First Paris Press* (Bibliographical Society's Publications, 1898).

² These editions are three in number: Rome, 1584 and 1589; and Frankfort, 1614.

³ *Card. Pap. Epistolae*, No. 30.

by others at his dictation.¹ This was apparently the manuscript which he gave to Campano for revision, and afterwards ordered his scribe Gobellinus to copy. Gobellinus finished his task on 12 June 1464, and affixed his name to his handiwork after the common practice of copyists.² Yet the fact that Gobellinus's copy varies from the original in minor details only, shows that both friend and scribe played their part faithfully. They did nothing to spoil the essential character of the Pope's work. It seems almost certain that the over-zealous editor was Francesco Bandini-Piccolomini, Archbishop of Siena, under whose auspices the *Commentaries* were first published in 1584. We learn from the Archbishop's preface that he received a copy of the *Commentaries*, together with many other valuable manuscripts, as a bequest from his uncle, Cardinal Giovanni Piccolomini. He describes them as "a history of the times of Pope Pius II . . . related in the form of commentaries by one Johannes Gobellinus, a servant of the said Pius II." He had read the manuscript again and again in his younger days, and he considered "much, if not all of it, worthy not only of commendation but of admiration." His own appreciation of the work, coupled with the fact that spurious fragments "containing various errors" were being circulated at the time, made him determine to present the book to the world in its genuine form, "adorned with its own splendour."³ It is clear that the Archbishop would have us believe both that Gobellinus was the author of the *Commentaries* and that this published edition was a faithful rendering of the manu-

¹ For an account of this valuable discovery (Cod. Reginense, 1995) cf. Pastor, iii. Appendix 65, and Lesca, pp. 21-2, 27 seq.

² "Divo Pio II P.M. volente Johannes Gobellini de Lins Vicarius Bonnensis Colonien. Diocesis hoc opus anno 1464 die XII mensis Junii excripsi feliciter." These are the concluding words of the MS. of the *Commentaries*, formerly in the possession of Prince Corsini, and now in the Vatican (Cod. Corsini, 35 b. 11). Cf. Lesca, pp. 26-7.

³ The Archbishop's preface is given both in the Roman and in the Frankfort editions.

script in his possession. Yet it is difficult to imagine that he was deceived as to the real author of the book, or that the manuscript, which he was at pains to describe as most trustworthy, was any other than Gobellinus's original copy.¹ The most obvious conclusion is that the Archbishop deliberately omitted such passages of the original as seemed to him unedifying, and that even when this was done, he did not consider the book sufficiently decorous to be published under the name of his Papal relative. To one bred in the atmosphere of the Counter-Reformation, Pius II's outspoken criticisms of persons and events, and the unedifying scenes in the Sacred College which he pictures, must have seemed wholly unsuitable for publication.² Moreover, the essentially unecclesiastical tone of the *Commentaries* accorded ill with the prevailing conception of Papal dignity. Thus it is easy to understand the Archbishop's point of view, although it is less easy to forgive him. The confusion with Gobellinus, and the knowledge that an editor's hand has been at work, have created an impression of uncertainty with regard to the *Commentaries* which has proved curiously tenacious. It has cast an unwarrantable slur upon the reputation of a great book.³

His own age judged Pius II mainly by his work as a statesman; the achievements of his Pontificate formed the criterion of his greatness in contemporary eyes. Later generations, justly regarding him as first of all a man of letters, based their judgment principally upon his literary work. Yet the permanent importance of Pius II is not due to achievement in any sphere, it is

¹ *I.e.* the Corsini MS. Cf. Lesca, p. 23.

² In 1883, Cugnoni, the Keeper of the Chigi Library, published the passages from the *Commentaries* contained in the MS. under his charge but omitted from the printed editions. The Chigi MS. agrees in all essentials with the Corsini and Reginese versions. Another MS. is preserved in the Leicester Library at Holkam.

³ For a full discussion of the problem of the *Commentaries*, cf. Lesca, pp. 9-42.

rather the outcome of his personality. We remember him less for what he did, or for what he wrote, than for what he was. Both in theory and in practice he is the complete humanist. In him we have the fullest illustration of the ideals of humanism, as conceived by the scholars, and as realised in active life. His sympathies and his aversions, his virtues and his vices, his weakness and his power, are all typical of humanism. Thus the study of his career gives us a unique insight into the ideals of the Renaissance world. His failure and his success help us to estimate the value of humanism as a contribution to civilisation, as a phase in the intellectual and spiritual development of the European nations.

The history of Æneas Silvius is from first to last a character-study; and when the story has been told to the end, he still remains something of an enigma. Of all the great historians who have written about him, no two have come to the same conclusion. Yet his was not really a profound or complex nature. Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of his character was the quality of youthfulness. Vanity, egoism, restlessness, passion, prejudice, these are some of the vices of youth, and Pius, even after the rejection of Æneas, was guilty of every one of them. On the other hand, he has his full share of the virtues of youth. To his dying day he retained his enthusiasm, his energy, his strong affections, his delight in simple pleasures, and his love of beauty. His body grew old before its time, but he was always young in spirit, and in this he showed himself a true child of the Renaissance.

From the outset of his career his general attitude towards life was that of the humanist. He looked upon the world as a field for his conquests, and he set out in life with the determination to capture the world by the simple means of adapting himself to its requirements. Humanism insisted that eloquence, tact, courtesy, and knowledge of his fellows were the all-important qualities

which fitted a man to play his part in the world with success. Æneas possessed these gifts by nature, and he cultivated them persistently. He was also endowed to a marked degree with what may be called the dramatic sense. In every incident of his public life he would, almost unconsciously, make a mental picture of the ideal attitude to be adopted under the circumstances. Once seen, the picture became his own, and he was most truly himself in living up to it. Many people have in consequence dubbed him a hypocrite. Others may prefer to call him an artist. But, be this as it may, no one can deny that the effect on his career was eminently successful. The rise of Æneas Silvius from obscurity and poverty to the throne of S. Peter is a permanent witness to the strength of the humanist ideal.

Nevertheless, in looking back upon his history, the prevailing impression which we gather is that of the limitations of humanism as a guide to life. As a man of letters, he suffered from a humanist's exaggerated devotion to the classics. If he had been willing to write in Italian, instead of imprisoning his talent within the fetters of a dead language, his contribution to literature would have been immeasurably greater. More than this, the ideals of humanism were not high enough to grapple with the problems of his Pontificate. It was not that he lacked an ideal for the Papacy. He strove persistently to raise its prestige and to make it once more a living force in Europe. He had the wisdom and the imagination to embrace a crusading policy as the true means of attaining his end. Nevertheless, he failed; and although it may be argued that the conditions of the age were more than enough to account for his failure, it must be remembered that he himself was a child of the age. In order to realise his ideal of the Papacy, it was not enough to adapt himself to the world, it was necessary to defy the world. A Pope who could have reformed the Curia, and marshalled the forces of Europe against the Turk in the fifteenth century,

must have been possessed by the divine folly of the mediæval saint, who despised the world and its standards, and was ready to fly in the face of reason and expediency for the sake of an ideal that could only be realised in eternity. Pius was ready to go out against the Turk when there was reasonable hope that the States of the Church would not be torn from him during his absence. He was not prepared to stake his all upon a great venture. He did the utmost that expediency sanctioned for the cause of the Crusade; but, while he was waiting for the princes of Europe to follow his example, he built Pienza. Thus he was not able to convince Christendom of his sincerity, or to restore the fallen credit of the Papacy. He takes his place in the long line of attractive failures who have adorned the pages of the world's history. An idealist, and at the same time a man of the world, high-souled, large-hearted, and intensely human, he saw the highest even while he failed to make it his sole end in life. Both in his success and in his failure he is the mirror of his age.

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